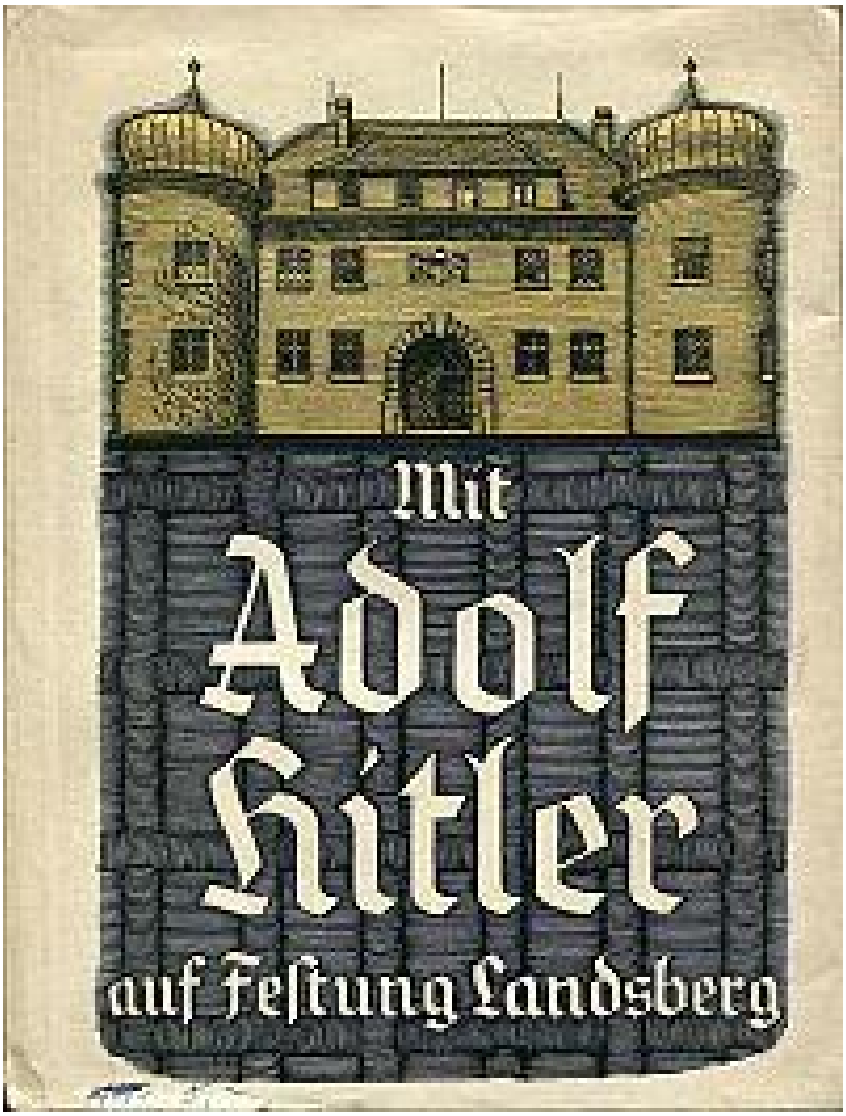
With Adolf Hitler at Landsberg Fortress

Revised Edition by fellow prisoner Lieutenant Hans Kallenbach, formerly a machine gun platoon leader in the "Stoßtrupp Adolf Hitler 1923"



Fourth edition, 30,000-40,000 copies

With a provided motto by the Führer and 37 previously unpublished images[1]

Verlag Kreß & Hornung, Munich, 25

[1] Although mentioned here, the 1943 edition of this book contains no pictures except a sketch, unlike the 1933 edition. I theorize this is due to wartime production costs. Otherwise, between editions, the text has not changed.

"The NSDAP has no objections to the publication of this document, and can be found listed in the NSDAP bibliography."

The Chairman of the Party Official Examination Commission for the Protection of National-Socialist Literature
Berlin, May 3rd 1939

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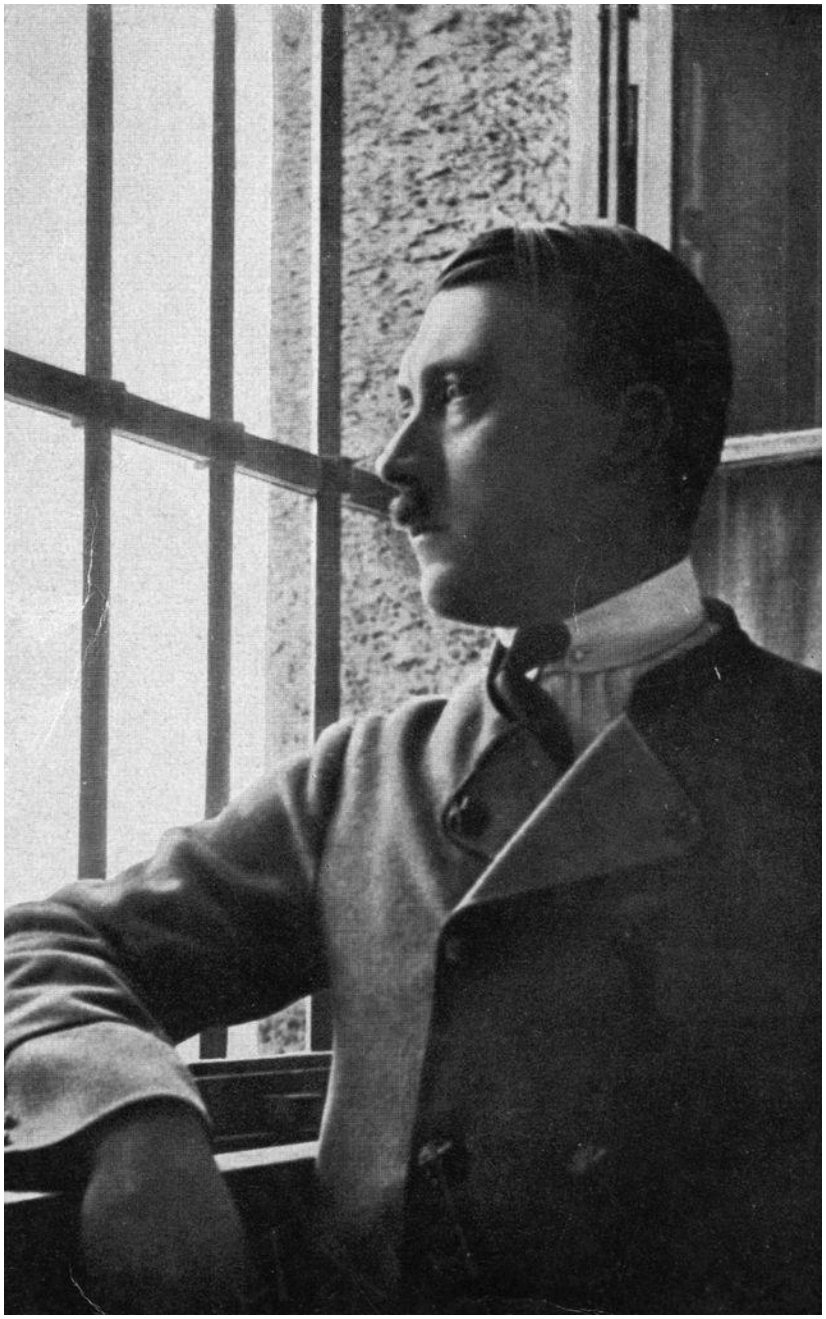
“Those who learn to complain in times of adversity will never become masters of adversity!”



Adolf Hitler

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Preface

In later years, Adolf Hitler, the Führer of the Greater German Reich, called this period in the history of the movement covered by this book "the most difficult time of his life".

I have endeavored to describe this still little-known period in the development of the NSDAP retrospectively and have tried to give a realistic picture of those weeks and months in which Adolf Hitler found the time to create his immortal, monumental work, "Mein Kampf," on the basis of my diary entries and my letters from the fortress prison. With his book, the Führer laid the foundations that have anchored our world view in the German people for all time.
If, by writing down my memories, I have succeeded in bringing the genius that is Adolf Hitler, his personality and his character, as close to the readers as they revealed themselves to us, his fellow prisoners at the time, then the purpose of this book has been fulfilled.

At this point, I would like to thank all the comrades of the "Stoßtrupp Adolf Hitler 1923" who, where memory failed me, supported my efforts to achieve a complete and accurate account.
I would like to thank the professors Heinrich Hoffmann, Berthold Fischer, and Anton Kloss, as well as the Landsberg am Lech Tourist Office, for numerous photographs.
Heartfelt thanks are due to the Main Archives of the Reich Leadership of the NSDAP, which provided valuable services by kindly and accommodatingly providing the original images and documents only available in its holdings.
I would like to express the same thanks to the Party Official Examination Commission for the Protection of National-Socialist Literature in Berlin and its case workers for valuable suggestions.
I thank the publishers for the careful design of the book, which has spared no effort in providing a worthy setting for my notes.
It is with deep reverence and gratitude that I remember the Führer, who gave my memoirs an inspiring motto, under whose guiding words the content of this book stands.

Capital of the Movement[2], Easter 1939.
The Author

[2] A National-Socialist nickname for Munich.

Preface to the Fourth Edition

In the fourth year of this mighty war, in which, according to the Führer's words, “the survival or destruction of the German nation and, with it, the future of Europe is at stake”, the fourth edition of my memoirs of this period of my imprisonment in the Landsberg Fortress has been republished; just as it was then, almost 20 years ago, and later, in the long years of the difficult and austere struggle for power in Germany, so now the men of the “Stoßtrupp Adolf Hitler 1923” are once again fighting on the front lines, whether on land, at sea, or in the air - the fathers stand with the sons.

In Poland and Norway, in Belgium and France, in Yugoslavia and Greece, we were there for the unstoppable victory march of the new German armed forces, and we continue to be there in the wide plains of Russia, near Leningrad; on the Donets and Mius Rivers; in the swampy lowlands of the Kuban bridgehead, and in the sun-drenched mountains of Sicily - and we will be there in the final battle against England.
Those of the Stoßtruppen, however, who are not privileged to serve their leader and supreme commander with their weapons in their hands, will fulfill their duty on the home front - in the service of the party or in the war economy.

In the past four years, death has torn unbridgeable gaps in our ranks, and has further reduced the number of those still living who were then part of our “lost troop”:

On February 16th, 1941, shortly after his 65th birthday, our fatherly friend and advisor in good and bad days, SA-Obergruppenführer Colonel Herman Kriebel, Ambassador of the German Reich, passed away forever. With him, the Nazi Party and, beyond that, the entire German nation lost an exceptionally powerful personality that possessed the indomitable will to fight and the highest personal commitment to the Fatherland. After a solemn state ceremony in front of the historic Feldherrnhalle in Munich, at which the Führer bid farewell to his upright and tireless follower, we laid Hermann Kriebel to his last rest in the quiet village cemetery of Niederafchau (Chiemgau).

On March 3rd, 1942, in a field hospital on the Eastern Front, our good comrade, Knight's Cross holder Major Josef Fleischmann, a battalion commander in a mountain infantry regiment, succumbed to his severe wounds suffered in the fight against the Soviets at the age of 41. After successfully leading a counterattack against vastly superior Bolshevik forces, personally, boldly and enthusiastically in the old shocktroop style, with which his battalion succeeded in mastering a critical situation, he fell victim to an enemy grenade that put an all-too-sudden end to his exemplary military career. With him, one of the best and bravest from our ranks has joined the heavenly ranks.

While this edition was going to press, I received the shocking news that Hermann Fobke, the member of the Stoßtrupp who was so often mentioned in this memoir and who was particularly close to me, died of a heart attack on the Führer's birthday in 1943 in the Crimean peninsula, where he was serving as a Sonderführer[3] and war correspondent. He was my best friend. He sleeps in anticipation of his resurrection in the Heroes' Cemetery in Kerch.

Our good and loyal comrades, the Stoßtruppen Wilhelm Kaiser and Franz Lutz, are also no longer with us. They fell while carrying out their cordon duties, which had become a dear and honorable tradition for us shocktroop men, during the ruthless assassination attempt on the Führer, (which was masterminded by the British Secret Service), in the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich on November 8th, 1939.

[3] Literally “special leader” in the Wehrmacht; Fobke’s role was leading a propaganda department.

Like our comrade Karl Laforce, who died at the Feldherrnhalle 20 years ago, and the Stoßtruppmen Josef Fleischmann and Hermann Fobke, who died on the Eastern Front, Wilhelm Kaiser and Franz Luß are among the painful sacrifices that must be made in our fight for the reorganization of Europe against a rotten world, held in the grips of a united front, plutocracy and Bolshevism.
At the end of this fight stands German victory!

Capital of the Movement, August 1943.
Hans Kallenbach.

“Stoßtrupp Adolf Hitler 1923”

“Even the smallest minority can achieve great things when it is motivated by the most ardent and passionate will to act.”
Adolf Hitler, April 12th, 1922

May 1923 - The German Reich, embodied in the then November Republic, was approaching general chaos at breathtaking speed. Strikes and uprisings in east, west and central Germany followed one another in rapid succession. Enemy armies, French Senegalese, Moroccans and Anamites[4] marched deep into the bleeding German countryside, encamped on the Rhine, the Ruhr and the Saar. More and more, the “passive resistance” proclaimed by Reich Chancellor Cuno proved to be a highly double-edged measure of desperation; its limited effectiveness was delayed and undermined by the onset of “inflation”, which was devised by the villainous Jewish speculators and implemented by their international, unscrupulous Marxist accomplices, to financially bleed the tortured German people. The legal plundering of the remnants of the German nation’s wealth that had been saved from the war had begun.
Separatist tendencies in the West and South, eagerly fanned by the representatives of the enemy powers and the ever-increasing spread of Bolshevization in the East and North brought the national soul, torn by political passion, to the boiling point. Long and far-reaching cracks appeared in the framework and foundations of the Weimar Republic; it seemed as if it would only take a small push to bring about the complete collapse of the once so proud and mighty work of the “Iron Chancellor”, the old Bismarckian empire.
In this chaotic turmoil, anyone who still dared to think nationally, anyone who had kept a cool head and a clear mind in this maelstrom of general confusion, looked with hot hope to Bavaria, to Munich, where national self-confidence and the firm will to stop the impending downfall were powerfully stirring and swelling like an avalanche, day after day.

More than three years ago, in the Hofbräuhaus State Brewery in Munich, Adolf Hitler had announced the 25 points of the official program of the NSDAP, and thus declared war on the policy of cowardly submission and the undignified stance of “compliance at any price”, in which the men of November saw their salvation.
A year and a half later, in the same hall, the first Sturmabteilungens[5] of the National Socialist German Workers' Party, which was gaining more and more support every day, had convincingly demonstrated their hard and determined will to action in a victorious battle against superior forces. The following year, on German Day at Coburg, they drove Marxists, Communists and Jews through the streets of the old ducal city, proclaiming that a new era was inexorably approaching. At the beginning of 1923, astonished Munich had witnessed the first party conference of the young movement, which was met by stormy enthusiasm.
In the first days of May of the same year, a new and yet familiar uniform appeared on the streets of the Bavarian capital - the field dress of the German front-line soldier, which had changed little on the outside, had found new wearers.
The tunic was field gray, and the collar was adorned with green piping with green-piped buttons. The trousers were also field gray, and without any piping. Black leather gear and tall black jackboots completed the outfit. A simple gray canvas cap, similar to the later soft SA cap, served as headgear. A silver skull on a red background was located on the front above the brim of the cap. The black, white and red-bordered epaulettes bore the inscription “St. Tr. Hitler” embroidered in yellow silk. A red swastika armband, sewn with black velvet stripes on both edges, was worn on the left arm. In bad weather, a windbreaker in the same color as the uniform was added.

[4] Older French term for Vietnamese people
[5] Full name of the SA, or brownshirts.

The faces of the men who gathered in this dress of honor were hard, angular and determined. In full dress, they wore the steel helmet instead of the gray cap, which was particularly eye-catching due to the painted swastika and skull.

On the basis of the experiences of that first Saalschlacht[6] in the Hofbränhaus and the fight for Coburg[7], it had become necessary to be able to fall back on a small but selected and absolutely reliable force, in addition to the mass of the united Sturmabteilungens, in order to solve special tasks. The fastest standard of readiness, the highest degree of mobility, the most appropriate equipment and the most thorough specialized training were to qualify them for use at any time and for surprise missions in which speed was of the essence. The group could not number more than a hundred men at the most, and all of them had to be determined to succeed and sworn to each other unto death. Each individual fighter accepted into their ranks had to be ready and able to solve particularly difficult tasks and to carry out important individual orders with precision. Unconditional subordination, unfailing loyalty, courage and bravery had to inspire all members of the group, from the leader downwards.
These were the ideas put forward to the leader of the movement by the old, battle-hardened soldier and Party member Julius Schreck. Adolf Hitler approved these plans and commissioned their proponent to bring the

'Stoßtrupp Hitler'

into being. So that the demands placed on the inner attitude and strength of character of the Stoßtruppen would be fully met, Julius Strecker himself took on the role of sergeant, the mother of the company. He personally selected former front-line fighters from the Munich SA at the time to form the core of the newly established formation; he recruited additional front-line soldiers from the ranks of the party. He also devoted his forward-looking attention to the question of recruitment by bringing up hardened veterans, who had previously fought in the Baltic States, in Upper Silesia and in the suppression of communist uprisings in the interior of the Reich, into the Stoßtrupp. Some enthusiastic students and young men who had not yet faced the enemy but were eager to give their lives for Germany's resurrection were also among those recruited.
Julius Schreck was tireless in checking the actual front-line service and special weapons knowledge of his chosen ones on the basis of military passports, muster rolls and rank lists. Not the slightest detail escaped his trained eye. He only accepted real men, like himself, into the Stoßtrupp.
Thirteen years later, in May 1936, a treacherous infection suddenly tore the founder of the Stoßtrupp, the long-time driver and constant companion of the Führer, from our ranks. For a hundred thousand miles he had driven during the years of the struggle for the re-establishment of the Party, and always with the same unfailing safety, the same unfailing reliability and the same unfailing endurance, in wind and weather, by day and by night, through the German countryside, until the day when the wheel of his car slipped forever out of the strong hand of this master of drivers.
His body was laid to rest in the idyllic village cemetery in Gräfelfing near Munich. But his spirit marches on in the movement, in the columns of the 1st SS-Standarte Munich, which has since borne the name "Julius Schreck". The words with which the Führer's representative expressed the NSDAP's grief at the sudden death of one of its oldest and most loyal members will never be forgotten:

"One of the best and most devoted, and one of the most modest, who wanted nothing for himself, who gave everything for Germany and his Führer, has moved to Valhalla. Wherever Germany had to fight, he was at the front – as much at home in the Great War as out of it. His admiration and love for the Führer

[6] The "Saalschlacht" was a brawl between the SA and anti-Nazi opponents during a NSDAP meeting within the Hofbränhaus State Brewery. This brawl established the reputation of the SA.
[7] Called "German Day in Coburg" during the Third Reich era, this event occurred on October 14th 1922 when multiple street brawls broke out between the SA and communists during a NSDAP-led weekend rally in the city of Coburg.

knew no bounds, his concern for the Führer was tireless, and he was ever mindful of the Führer's safety. His very nature radiated reliability to the very end. In difficult times of battle, his presence instilled a sense of security in his fellow drivers. His judgment of people was unerring, his affection and dislike were undisguised. A rough warhorse with a warm heart. Feared by the enemy, loved by all who counted him as one of their own. Adored as a fatherly friend by his subordinates. He had the good fortune to enjoy the utmost trust of his leader."

That, was Julius Schreck.

Thanks to the energy and drive of its founder, the Stoßtrupp was quickly established and appropriately structured.
Adolf Hitler also entrusted one of his oldest and most loyal followers, cut from the same cloth as Julius Schreck, with the leadership of these troops.
Party member Josef Berchtold, a tried and tested squad leader of the old German army, possessing a wiry, athletic figure, and who belonged to that death-defying generation of lieutenants which the enemy powers had never been able to imitate despite their best efforts, took command. A soldier and officer through and through, he had been one of the first men to rally to Adolf Hitler. In the first Hofbräuhaus Hall battle, in Coburg and in Immenstadt, wherever there was fighting, he was in the front line. Adolf Hitler could not have found a more worthy, more devoted, more valiant leader of his Stoßtrupp than him, Josef Berchtold.

The manners, customs and behavior of the Stoßtruppen were hard and rough and sometimes quite uncouth. They knew nothing of false considerations or tiptoeing. They believed in the law of the jungle, the old law of the jungle, and in adversity they knew no rules. But unbreakable camaraderie, iron solidarity through thick and thin, and an unstoppable urge to move forward lived in their ranks.
In keeping with one of the Führer's unequivocal guiding principles, we broke the red and black terror wherever it dared to show itself, with ever stronger counter-terror, increasing in ferocity to the point of brutality, mindful of the old strategic truth: "The best defense is attack." Our Stoßtrupp, organized at lightning speed, blew apart every human wall that stood in our way. When necessary, we solidified into a single or multiple men deep barrier that could not be shaken or moved. When the whistled signal of Josef Berchtold or his deputy Julius Schreck sounded and the command "Stoßtruppen - to the attack on the right and left - march, march!" called us to action, then the feet flew through the area and in minutes the streets and alleys were swept clean of the enemy. It was always a tough struggle when we were let loose, when Berchtold, Schreck and Maurice lashed out, as the sparks flew and we all flew forward and put all our ambition into doing the same as our forerunners.
Soon we were known in the village and in the city, far and wide. The provocations of the Reds became rarer and rarer and more and more tame when the Stoßtruppen appeared on the scene. We earned the respect and love of our friends. The enemy followed us with hatred and scorn.

The small shop of Josef Berchtold, who ran a cigar store in the valley at the time, was our first place of residence. The owner of the shop must not have achieved much commercial success, because the cramped shop looked more like a field camp than a civilized salesroom. Skirts and trousers were mended, boots greased, belt buckles polished, steel helmets painted, and in the midst of this chaos, Julius Schreck sat enthroned, bent over lists of names and intel reports, the personification of calm. But Josef Berchtold, instead of selling cigars and tobacco, distributed his wares for free among the tobacco-hungry Stoßtruppmen, who suffered from a chronic lack of small change, or stood pressed into some corner of the counter and drafted training programs and service orders.
Forced by the lack of space, we later moved the Stoßtrupp office to Schellingstraße, where it began to resemble a museum of captured victory trophies. The walls were festooned with numerous black-red-and-yellow Reichsbanner flags, framed by blood-red Red Front banners of the Knights of the Star of David, who, under the sign of the hammer and sickle and shouting "Hail Moscow," saw the salvation of the world. Baton clubs, knuckledusters and sidearms of all kinds, SPD badges and other

Marxist-Communist emblems were artfully attached to the cloth of the flags and added to the spoils of our victories.
We remained loyal to our emergency meeting place, the "Torbräu" bowling alley, even after the office was moved; we could not part with the gloomy place, which was so useful for our secret purposes.

The rapidly deteriorating general political situation at the beginning of October 1923 also meant that new tasks were to be expected for the Stoßtrupp. Accordingly, its fighting strength was further strengthened by the appropriate organization of the Stoßtruppen with regard to their respective military capabilities.
We were divided into three platoons. The infantrymen gathered in the first platoon, which was under the command of Party member v. Knobloch. The second platoon, consisting of submachine gunners, mortars, and artillerymen, was led by Hans Schön. The third platoon, which included the entire operating crew for two heavy and two light machine guns, a few signalmen, and cyclists, was placed under my command.
The necessary weapons and ammunition for the infantry, submachine-gunners and machine-gunners were available and could be obtained at any time if necessary. The provision of the so-called "heavy escort weapons" remained a question for the future, i.e. it was hoped that they could be taken from the respective enemy in due course.
As a result of these measures, the Hitler Stoßtrupp had become an almost purely military force with a considerable fighting value by the standards of the time. The lieutenant was flanked by the student, the civil servant by the laborer; the white-collar worker marched shoulder to shoulder with the craftsman, the freelance artist with the factory director. Voluntary soldiering, extreme discipline and exemplary camaraderie had been brought to perfection.

Late one afternoon at the end of October 1923, we lined up for the first time in our new formation in front of the printing house of the "Völkischer Beobachter" newspaper.
In a crisp voice, with pride in his troops resonating in his tone, Josef Berchtold commanded: "Stoßtruppen – attention! Eyes – right!"
At a single command, a hundred heads turned in the direction he indicated. Two hundred enthusiastic eyes beamed at the man who, dressed in a simple gray raincoat, stepped out of the dark archway toward the straight rows of his men. Adolf Hitler slowly scanned each individual with a piercing gaze as he walked along the front line. He paused briefly in front of each of his men, looked him straight in the eye, as if he wanted to look deep into the soul of his follower, and bound each individual to himself and his movement forever with a handshake. With that, we were once again taken into service and duty by Adolf Hitler.
Just a few days later, on November 8th, 1923, we had to prove that the Führer could rely on his Stoßtruppen - as the first of all party formations, we had to initiate the German uprising.
Secret orders from Adolf Hitler and his first Supreme SA Leader, Hermann Göring, called us to our assembly point as early as midday; as the only troop deployed by the SA and the Kampfbund[8], we had to open the operation in the Bürgerbräukeller and carry it out in accordance with the instructions issued.
In the course of these actions, more and more special assignments arose for us, the dutiful execution of which took up all our strength.

The treacherous and shameful breach of faith that same night by the triumvirate of Gustav von Kahr, Otto von Lossow and Hans Ritter von Seisser, along with their dark backers, made the following hours of the betrayal of November 9th, 1923 a day of deepest mourning for the movement, and one of the most tragic events in the history of Greater Germany.
The work began with ardent hearts and glowing love for the Volk and the fatherland; it was stifled by that bloodbath in front of the Feldherrnhalle in Munich. Germany's last reserve was wiped out, whipped down by the bullets of the reactionaries and its henchmen.

[8] League of nationalist fighting societies, which included the NSDAP.

For another unspeakably long ten years, the German people sank into nameless hardship and terrible misery. All the efforts and sacrifices seemed in vain. The ordeal that the German people had to go through from then on was almost endless, and we suffered with them.
Fourteen of our best comrades fell around noon on that gray November day in front of the Feldherrnhalle, and two others lost their lives in the courtyard of the neighboring former Bavarian War Ministry. Sixteen German men joyfully gave their hearts and blood for Germany's freedom in these fateful hours. Fifteen of them belonged to the formations united in the fighting alliance, the SA, the Freikorps Oberland[9] and the Bund Reichskriegsflagge[10]. One belonged to the Stoßtruppe: Karl Laforce, our youngest and most vivacious comrade.
We laid them to rest in iron sarcophagi, and carried them to their final resting place in the temples of honor at the Königlicher Platz; there, in accordance with the Führer's wishes, they keep eternal watch over Germany and the German people, for whom they had to die so that the Reich might live. In spirit they have since marched in our ranks, and will continue to march in the ranks of our descendants, long after we have been called before the Almighty into eternity.

[9] Paramilitary organization that represented the Freikorp in the Silesian Uprisings, the Ruhr Uprising, and pitched battles with communists and Polish insurgents; it joined with the NSDAP in September 1923.
[10] Paramilitary organization founded by Ernst Röhm in 1923, which was transferred to Hitler’s control in September 1923.

The Stoßtrupp Before the People's Court

“The movement that is ready to fight for its ideals, even to the last, will rise.”
- **Adolf Hitler, August 21st, 1923**

On November 11th, 1923, Adolf Hitler was arrested and taken into custody. A few days later, the preliminary arrest was converted into a pre-trial detention. The Attorney General of the Free State of Bavaria had brought charges of “high treason” against Adolf Hitler and his underlings.
The historic “Great Hitler Trial” lasted from February 26th to March 27th, 1924, in the former Bavarian War College of Blutenburgstraße in Munich.
The People's Court, which was responsible for the judgment in this criminal case, was a creation of the post-war period for the trial of political offenses. The bench was presided over by District Court Judge Neithardt.
If until then Adolf Hitler and his aims had only been known in his immediate circles of Bavaria and southern Germany, this major and highly politicalized criminal trial made his name and his intentions known not only throughout the Reich, but globally. The result was the opposite of what the directors of the proceedings had intended - the accused became the accusers, the witnesses became the accused. A mighty call went out from the overcrowded courtroom in Munich to the far reaches of the Reich: “Germany, awake!” It found an echo in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of German-minded people.

The stirring address of the defense, delivered by Adolf Hitler, roused the hearts of his followers to their very depths. It was a final word that was sure to shape the future, and it was to prove more true than even his accusers at the time could have suspected. It ran as follows:

“The army which we have formed is growing in numbers each day, and more rapidly as each hour passes. In these very days I cherish the proud hope that these unorganized troops will one day form battalions, the battalions will become regiments, the regiments will become divisions; the old cockade will be retrieved from the dirt, the old flags will once again be borne aloft - that finally, when we face our Maker on the day of the Last Judgment, as we are ready to do, our redemption will come. From our bones and from our graves the voice of the only court of justice qualified to pass judgment on us will speak - for it is not you, Gentlemen, who are passing judgment upon us, but the eternal tribunal of history which is sitting in judgment and will pronounce its verdict on the charges you throw at us today. I know what your verdict will be. But that other court will not ask: "Did you or did you not commit high treason?" That other court will pass judgment upon us, upon the Quartermaster General of the old army, on his officers and men, who as Germans wanted the best for their fellow Germans and their fatherland, who were willing to fight and to die for it. Even if you find us guilty a thousand times, the Goddess of the eternal tribunal of history will smile and tear up the Prosecutor's indictment and the verdict of this court; for she will pronounce us innocent.”

The court announced its verdict on April 1st, 1924. Adolf Hitler and his generals, Dr. Friedrich Weber, retired Lieutenant Colonel Hermann Kriebel and retired Police President Ernst Pöhner, were each sentenced to five years in prison for the crime of high treason. On the same day, with the exception of the seriously ill Police President Ernst Pöhner, they were immediately remanded into custody. The prisoners were taken to the prison and fortress of Landsberg am Lech.

Despite this formal conviction, it had become clear to the men of the system that they had suffered a crushing moral defeat, which became apparent a few weeks later when the recently convicted “traitor” Adolf Hitler was able to unite 2 million votes on the list of his supporters in the announced political election. In order to somewhat obscure the impression of this failure, a large-scale wave of persecution was launched in Bavaria, and particularly in Munich, against all those who, rather than thinking in terms of Bavarian particularism and separatism, were thinking in national and pan-German terms. We men of

the Stoßtrupp were also mercilessly caught up in the wheels of this class justice wielded by the November Republic.

As far as we were acting or even leading, and could be arrested by the police, we were transferred to the People's Court at the Munich District Court a few days after the “Great Hitler Trial”.
The proceedings against us were based on a 36-page indictment. It read:

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Munich, April 29th, 1924.
Re: Josef Berchtold and companions, charged with aiding and abetting high treason (the attempted coup of November 8th-9th, 1923)

To the presiding judge of the People's Court:
I request that a main hearing be scheduled before the People's Court in Munich for the following persons:

1. Berchtold, Josef, born March 6th, 1907, single, merchant in Munich, currently on the run.
2. Maurice, Emil, born January 19th, 1907, single, watchmaker in Munich.
3. v. Knobloch, Heinrich, born January 9th, 1911, married, merchant in Munich.
4. Kallenbach, Hans, born October 28th, 1897, married, operations manager in Munich
5. Schön, Johann, born February 12th, 1893, married, factory owner in Munich
6. Laforce, Wilhelm, born August 4th, 1886, single, authorized signatory in Munich
7. Fiehler, Werner, born March 3rd, 1889, married, senior accountant in Munich, currently on the run.
8. Hutter, Karl, born April 24th, 1891, single, butcher in Munich
9. Hamm, Emil, born September 10th, 1891, married, state police constable in Munich
10. Strauß, Heinrich, born June 23rd, 1901, married, boilermaker in Munich
11. Wegelin, Johann, born July 21st, 1900, single, student in Bremen.
12. Fischer, Berthold, born July 8th, 1899, married, actor in Munich
13. Heiden, Erhard, born February 23rd, 1901, single, merchant in Munich
14. Fuchs, Wilhelm, born July 4th, 1904, single, student in Munich
15. Briemann, Wilhelm, born March 3rd, 1899, single, merchant in Munich
16. Schmied, Ludwig, born November 24th, 1898, single, warehouse clerk and editor in Munich
17. Schnieder, Edmund, born November 5th, 1902, single, bank official in Munich
18. Schaub, Julius, born August 20th, 1898, single, composer in Munich
19. Steinbinder, Michael, born October 18th, 1894, domestic servant in Munich
20. Hirschberg, Paul, born June 13th, 1901, single, commercial clerk in Munich
21. Fobke, Hermann, born November 4th, 1899, single, student in Munich
22. Feichtmayr, Otto, born July 23rd, 1905, single, plumber in Munich
23. Danneberg, Emil, born September 2nd, 1896, married, businessman in Munich
24. Hauenstein, Karl, born October 7th, 1897, married, businessman in Munich
25. Fiehler, Karl, born August [31st][11] 1895, married, municipal administrative assistant in Munich
26. Knörlein, Wilhelm, born August 25th, 1896, married, hairdresser in Munich
27. Rosenwink, Alois, born August 1st, 1898, married, merchant in Munich
28. Feichtmayr, Josef, born November 12th, 1901, single, mechanic fitter in Munich
29. Haug, Johann, born April 19th, 1898, single, hotel clerk in Munich
30. Linder, Konrad, born January 18th, 1908, single, police assistant in Munich
31. Mahr, Johann, born August 6th, 1881, married, supervisory official in Munich
32. Geißelbrecht, Friedrich, born October 16th, 1895, married, merchant in Munich
33. Reichart, Otto, born September 4th, 1896, married, postal trainee in Munich

[11] The original document leaves off day of birth, but historical record establishes it as the 31st.
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34. Maurer, Hansjörg, born October 20th, 1891, married, writer in Munich
35. Krüger, Hans, born December 21st, 1904, single, student in Munich
36. Hewel, Walter, born March 25th, 1904, single, student in Munich
37. Stollwerk, Adalbert, born June 6th, 1904, single, student in Munich
38. Gerum, Josef, born September 22nd, 1888, married, assistant detective in Munich
39. Fröschl, Franz, married, laborer in Munich
40. Hoff, Gerhard, single, bookseller in Hamburg

a) Composition:
On November 8th and 9th, 1923, Adolf Hitler, the leader of the National Socialist German Workers' Party, together with other persons close to him, undertook an attempt to forcibly remove the Reich and Bavarian government and to forcibly amend the constitutions of the German Reich and the Free State of Bavaria. As a means of enforcing this undertaking, Hitler had at his disposal, among others, the so-called "Stoßtrupp Hitler". This Stoßtrupp had been formed in the late spring of 1923 from particularly reliable and militarily useful members of the NSDAP, and had grown to about 80 to 100 men by early November 1923. The leader of the Stoßtrupp was cigar dealer Josef Berchtold, who is wanted for questioning. His adjutant is the watchmaker Emil Maurice. The defendants v. Knobloch, Hans Kallenbach and Johann Schön are sub-leaders. The following were among the other defendants:

Knobloch detachment: Wilhelm Laforce, Werner Fiehler, Karl Hutter, Johann Maurer, Hamm, Wegelin, Strauß Fischer, Heiden, Fuchs, Briemann, Schmied, Schneider, Schaub, Steinbinder, Hirschberg, Fobke, Otto Feichmayr, Krüger, Hewel and Stollwerk.

Kallenbach detachment: Danneberg, Hauenstein, Karl Fiehler, Knörlein, Fröschl, Hoff, Rosenwink and Josef Feichtmayr.

The Schön department: Haug, Linder, Mahr, Geißelbrecht and Reichart.

The defendant Gerum was assigned to the task force due to his position as a police officer.

b) Preparations:
On the evening of November 8th, 1923, Berchtold alerted the members of the Stoßtrupp to gather at the "Torbräu" bowling alley in the center of Munich at 6:00 p.m. Shortly after 6 o'clock, Berchtold greeted the Stoßtrupp with the words: "Comrades, the hour has come that we all, myself included, have longed for. Before I go on to further explanations, I call upon those who, for whatever reasons, have reservations about our cause, to resign." When no one resigned, Berchtold explained further that the Stoßtrupp had the task of carrying out the first strike of the movement, and that the sub-leaders would provide details later; in any case, the main goal was the overthrow of the present government and its replacement by a coalition between Hitler, Ludendorff, and Gustav Ritter von Kahr; the Stoßtrupp would be more or less the impelling force behind these new events. Berchtold then called upon all members of the Stoßtrupp to give their word of honor and shake hands on their unconditional obedience to their leaders. Then the Stoßtrupp marched under Berchtold's leadership to Balan Street and from there they went by trucks to Rosenheimer Street to the Bürgerbräukeller. On the way, each group was assigned its roles and the conspirators were informed that they had to take by surprise the assembly meeting in the Bürgerbräukeller and imprison them, because Hitler was going to overthrow the Reich government and the Bavarian government there and set up the new government.
Knowing of this intention of Hitler's, the defendants, as members of the Stoßtrupp, carried out the acts of violence described below in order to support their leader Adolf Hitler and his co-conspirators in the execution of their violent coup attempt, while making any kind of resistance impossible, especially from the Socialists.

c) The action in the Bürgerbräukeller:

Shortly after 8:30 p.m., a heavily armed Stoßtrupp took the guards at the entrance of the Bürgerbräukeller on Rosenheimer Street by surprise. The guards were blocking the entrance because the hall was overcrowded. The Stoßtruppen immediately took control of the garden and hall doors as planned. Schön, Maurer and Hutter, together with members of the artillery division and the 3rd and 4th infantry groups, including Haug, Linder, Strauß, Mahr, Geißelbrecht, Reichart, Fobke, Hierschberg, Otto Feichmayr, Krüger and Hewel, occupied the entrance. Knörlein, as the rifle squad leader, simultaneously brought his machine gun there and set it up with the firing line facing the street. Steinbinder and a few others stayed behind to guard the trucks. The 2nd infantry squad, led by Werner Fiehl, occupied all the exits from the hall to the garden. Briemann, Danneberg and Josef Feichmayr were present. Karl Fiehler and Danneberg, as riflemen, each positioned a machine gun pointing towards the hall in front of the exits. Schmied and others held the entrance to the Bräustüberl[12]. Berchtold, Maurice and the infantry leader v. Knobloch immediately rushed with the 1st infantry group, namely Wilhelm Laforce, Schneider, Fischer, Fuchs, Gerum, Hauenstein and Rosenwink, into the vestibule in front of the hall and took control of the entrance leading directly into the hall. Hautenstein and Rosenwink positioned another heavy machine gun here, as instructed, pointing it at the crowd in the middle of the hall entrance. Gerum and others stormed into the room after a brief consultation with Hitler, Göring, Scheubner-Richter and others who had been waiting in the anteroom. Gerum, pistol in hand, cleared a path for the advancing Hitler and remained at Hitler's side throughout the rest of the proceedings, ready to shoot to prevent any counterattacks. He also guarded the entrance to the adjoining room, into which Kahr, Loffow and Geisser had to go. Kallnbach, Wegelin and Heiden, meanwhile, guarded the main entrance of the hall with the machine guns. Towards the end of the meeting, the Stoßtruppen was drawn together at the hall exit and then checked the identity cards of the meeting participants leaving the hall.

d) Against the Munich Post Office:
At around 11 o'clock in the evening, when the assembly had dispersed, the leader of the SA, Captain (retired) Göring, addressed the Stoßtruppen assembled in the garden and gave the order to march immediately to the Munich Post Office building and to destroy it completely.
The marchers, under Berchtold's command, advanced on the building at Hans No. 19 on Altheimer Eck, which housed the editorial offices and printing presses of the Social Democratic newspapers “Münchner Post” and “Bayerisches Wochenblatt” under the company G. Birck & Co. In order to carry out their destructive work unimpeded, the first step was to remove the barriers at the street entrances. Kallenbach, Danneberg and their comrades set up two or three machine guns at a distance and pointed at the building; meanwhile, Maurice and other members of the Stoßtrupp smashed the four large display windows and the casings with rifle butts until the manager, threatened with a revolver, opened the iron gate. Immediately thereafter, several infantry groups stormed into the two floors of the building and began their operation. Around 380 individual window panes, door panels and cabinet doors were smashed; cabinets were knocked over, locked drawers were blown open and their contents scattered on the floor and trampled; several pictures and busts of leading Social Democrats were smashed, files and other documents were thrown into disarray, some of them thrown through the windows onto the street and then burned there. In the Seßersaal, a large number of letterboxes were torn out and the letters scattered on the floor and trampled. Fobke searched the rooms on the 3rd floor, confiscated advertising leaflets and cut all telephone lines. On the orders of Scheubner-Richter, the accused Gerum searched the study of the main editor Auer, which was also destroyed, confiscating a number of files and documents of a political nature and later delivered them personally to Hitler in the Bürgerbräukeller. When the destruction was in full swing, Chief Inspector Fuchs of the police, who had been sent to the scene, managed to persuade the leader Berchtold to gather his troops and refrain from further damage.

[12] A Bavarian term meaning a tavern or bar next to a brewery.

e) In the apartment of Member of Parliament Erhard Auer:
While the majority of the Stoßtrupp remained behind to guard the Munich Post Office building, Berchtold, Maurice, Kallenbach and another 15 to 20 men drove up to House no. 10 on Nussbaumstrasse, where the Social Democratic Member of the Bavarian Parliament Erhard Auer lived on the third floor. Berchtold intended to arrest Auer and take him to the Bürgerbräukeller. Schön and a few others held the street in front of the building, Karl Fiehler and others with machine guns held the rear side of the building, while Berchtold, Kallenbach and Maurice with 5 or 6 Stoßtruppen went to Auer's apartment, which had been opened at their request, where Mrs. Auer, her two daughters and her son-in-law were staying. Berchtold ordered the entire apartment and attic searched for the absent deputy Auer. He himself searched Auer's study with Kallenbach. They confiscated documents of a political nature and arrested Auer's son-in-law, who was later released from the Bürgerbräukeller, where he had been taken. Maurice also searched the other rooms of the Auer family.
After this search, Berchtold gathered the Stoßtruppen in front of the Munich Post Office and marched back to the Bürgerbräukeller.

f) Attempt to free Pöhner:
On the morning of November 9th, at 9 o'clock, the Stoßtrupp under Berchtold marched first down Rosenheimer Street toward the city. After only a few minutes they came to a halt. Berchtold and Wegelin arrested two uniformed sergeants of the Bavarian police because they had dutifully torn down posters of the subversives. After the Stoßtruppen had delivered the prisoners to the Bürgerbräukeller, they marched once again under the leadership of Berchtold to the police headquarters on Ettstraße. Here Kallenbach set up a heavy machine gun pointed at the police headquarters building. The other participants blocked off the streets in a wide radius. Berchtold wanted to try to take the police station and free Pöhner, a participant in the putsch who had been arrested there, but then withdrew because the police station was occupied by a large number of state police and he was unable to carry out his plan. The Stoßtruppen returned to the Bürgerbräukeller without having achieved anything.

g) The arrest of the city councilors:
Immediately after his return at around 10:30 a.m., the Stoßtrupp received the order to arrest the burgomaster and all socialist and communist city councilors and take them to the Bürgerbräukeller; a squad of Stoßtruppen therefore drove in front of the town hall on Marienplatz in trucks under the leadership of Berchtold. Under the leadership of v. Knobloch, the 1st and 2nd infantry groups, armed with rifles and pistols, stormed the council chamber of the town hall, where the committee of elders of the city council had been meeting since 10:15 a.m., under the chairmanship of the burgomaster Schmidt. Guards at the entrance to the hall held back the surging crowd. The members of the Stoßtrupp who had entered the hall spread out with their guns at the ready, so that it was impossible for the surprised city councilors to attempt to escape. Von Knobloch, with a gun pointed at them, announced the arrest of the burgomaster and the socialist and communist city councilors, and announced that the slightest attempt to escape would result in a shootout. The non-socialist city councilors were made to step to the side. Since he refused to get up from his chair, burgomaster Schmidt was forcibly yanked out of it; the same thing happened to the other city councilors who did not immediately get up from their seats. Finally, burgomaster Schmidt and the city councilors: Nußbaum, Schramke, Maurer, Niedermeier, Thierauf, Grainer, Hermann and Doll, each guarded by two men, led by Berchtold and v. Knobloch, were led across Marienplatz to the motor vehicles, spat on and verbally abused by the crowd, and driven to the Bürgerbräukeller by the motorcade. When, after the dispersal of the propaganda march at Odeonsplatz, most of the Stoßtruppen under Berchtold had returned to the Bürgerbräukeller around 2:00 p.m., the rest of the Stoßtrupp soon left the city in the direction of Rosenheim by car. The captured city councilors and the burgomaster were taken with them. In a forest near Höhenkirchen, the prisoners had to leave the truck and follow Berchtold and some of his men into the forest. There, the city council members Nußbaum, Maurer and Thierauf, who believed they were facing their last hour, had to hand over some of their clothing to Berchtold and Maurice, who used them to disguise themselves so that they could spy on the city without being

recognized. After Berchtold's departure, v. Knobloch took over the leadership of the Stoßtrupp. He drove with the prisoners to Höhenkirchen, where they were finally released.

h) The disarmament of the state police at the Ludwigsbrücke:
During the march to the Feldherrnhalle in the so-called propaganda march, the Stoßtrupp lined up at the Spiße just behind the leaders Hitler and Ludendorff. When the procession approached the Ludwigsbrücke, the police detachment set up to cordon it off prepared to use their rifles and pistols to forcibly prevent the procession from crossing the bridge. When Berchtold saw this, he ordered his men to disarm and arrest the police. Thereupon, under the leadership of Schön and Kallenbach, some of the Stoßtruppen jumped out of the procession on both sides, took the state police by surprise and forced them to discard their carbines, bayonets and steel helmets. Karl Fiehler, Haug and others led the disarmed men as prisoners to the Bürgerbräukeller. Schön also brought the captured weapons there by truck.
The rest of the Stoßtrupp then marched to the Feldherrnhalle, where the clash occurred. Members of the Stoßtrupp returned fire with the state police, and their machine guns were also brought into position.

The defendants have therefore knowingly aided and abetted their leader Adolf Hitler and his co-conspirators in the crime of high treason, in a conscious and deliberate act. These acts constitute for each defendant a jointly committed crime of high treason according to §§ 81, No. 2, 47, 49 of the German Penal Code.

Pursuant to Articles 4 and 25 of the Law of July 12th, 1919, concerning the establishment of People's Courts, the People's Court in Munich is the competent court.

(A list of the evidence follows.)

Signed: The Senior Public Prosecutor at the People's Court in Munich

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The external circumstances under which the five-day trial took place were not particularly favorable for us defendants. The incomprehensible verdict of the recently concluded “great Hitler trial,” which was far removed from the will of the people, still weighed heavily on every German-feeling heart like an evil nightmare. The Führer and his most loyal fellow combatants had been confined for days in the fortress prison of Landsberg am Lech. The Party and its press had been dissolved and banned, and the SA and the combat units had been disbanded.
The system press of all stripes, spearheaded by the “Münchner Post”, which had unfortunately been resurrected from the ashes of November 9th, 1923 with the help of the savings of misguided German workers, shouted triumphantly. It railed against Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party in every key, and proved with genuine Marxist and Jewish-democratic sophistry that the demand for an “exemplary punishment” of the “Hitler bandits” would exclusively occupy the interest of the broad public.
Accordingly, the proceedings were carried out with all the trimmings and in all the forms of a political show trial. The largest hall of the Munich Palace of Justice provided the setting.
The proceedings were introduced by reinforced police security measures and daily weapon searches of the defendants and the audience, which were repeated several times. In spite of all efforts of the then ruling parties in the 'Great Hitler Trial', it had not been possible to prove that the spontaneous national uprising of November 8th-9th, 1923, had been a carefully prepared and thought-out undertaking. This was to be made up for in the so-called 'Small Hitler Trial'. Furthermore, the prosecution tried by every means to prove that the movement had been financed with foreign capital. According to the Marxists and their press, we Stoßtruppen were supposedly well-paid 'mercenaries' of Adolf Hitler, who had paid for the cost of his personal bodyguard with 'foreign' funds of highly dubious origin. During the weeks of preliminary proceedings, they had therefore unscrupulously used all means at their disposal, probably in accordance
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with higher instructions, to keep the accused under all kinds of psychological and economic pressure. They tried to twist our statements, play one against the other and work with alleged confessions that had never been made.
Reports and the statements of a plethora of interrogated Marxist and Marxist-infected witnesses did the rest. Thus, with a great deal of cunning and trickery, we accused Stoßtruppen had to appear in this artificially created atmosphere before the court and the general public as “bloodthirsty barbarians” and “right-wing Bolsheviks”, in short, as “the scum of the underworld”.
All of the Stoßtrupp's enterprises, as listed in the indictment, had been carried out in a militarily concise, disciplined, and decisive manner, without any bloodshed or violence. Nevertheless, attempts were made to distort them through alleged “findings” and witness statements that could be used for this purpose, portraying them as undisciplined, barbaric and bloodthirsty acts of violence by a “bestial horde of bandits”. The aim was to instill knee-trembling fear and deep disgust for us representatives of the Third Reich in the orderly-loving, honest-to-goodness bourgeois.
The fact that we, the defendants, were all representatives of the young generation of front-line fighters of Ypres and Langemarck, who had not only done their duty on the battlefields of the World War for four years, but had also marched as Freikorps fighters against the Bolsheviks and had in part fought in the ranks of their volunteer units in the liberation of Munich from the rule of the soviets, was deliberately overlooked and ignored.
For example, the entire system press reported that the “horde” had wreaked havoc in the apartment of Deputy Auer, destroying thousands of marks' worth of property. At the trial, however, it suddenly emerged that the only damage incurred by Mrs. Aner, a witness who had been summoned to testify, was a mere 6 marks, caused by an accidentally broken plate.
The same was true of the alleged intentional “shooting of the Munich Communist and Marxist city councilors” by the Stoßtrupp, which was widely reported in all the newspapers and embellished with all sorts of terrible details.
This incredible attitude naturally led to a number of heated exchanges between the public prosecutor and his assistants on the one hand, and the defense and the defendants on the other. The dramatic climax of the proceedings was reached when all the defendants unanimously rejected these insulting tactics of the prosecuting attorney and, as German men and soldiers of Adolf Hitler, declared it unacceptable to answer further base and disgraceful accusations. This justified and, in view of the severity of the insult, almost self-evident act of self-defense gave the prosecutor cause to remark that, in view of the recalcitrant attitude of the defendants, he could indeed drop his charge of “aiding and abetting treason” and instead charge the Stoßtrupp with “organized rioting, armed insurrection and breach of the peace.” But this blunt threat of prison also had no effect against our united, closed front. One for all and all for one, we stood in exemplary, unshakeable camaraderie for each other and for our actions.
The origin of the weapons of the raiding party and its alleged payment from the ominous foreign funds were treated particularly broadly and in detail. In order to demonstrate the importance of the treatment of these questions, even on a purely superficial level, and to shroud them in a certain veil of secrecy, the public was even excluded at the request of the public prosecutor, who saw the Weimar Republic as being highly endangered by the discussion of these points. In long-winded statements, the prosecution sought to prove that the weapons of the Stoßtrupp had been systematically procured over the course of months with funds of dark, foreign origin by some mysterious and conspiratorial agents. However, this house of cards, built on air and on mere allegations, collapsed miserably when one of the Stoßtrupp men easily produced a weighty key of considerable size from his trouser pocket and deposited it with the court as the safe key to the foreign funds sought. The subsequent expert determination that the ‘corpus delicti’ fit exactly into the elaborate lock of a well-known and, in addition, state armory was apt in this case to deprive the prosecution of its more laboriously and cleverly constructed basis.

In our jointly formulated closing statement, the indestructible community of destiny between us men of the Stoßtrupp and our Führer Adolf Hitler, as well as our unbreakable will to serve Germany's recovery, was clearly and unequivocally expressed. It read:

"Today, just as on November 8th-9th, 1923, we are unswervingly determined, as loyal followers of our Führer Adolf Hitler, to regain our homeland's inner and outer freedom. In striving for this goal, we know we are united with millions of our fellow Germans. We will not rest or give up until this goal is achieved. Even if we are convicted as traitors according to the letter of the law, we will act as we have acted because we, as National Socialists and members of the Stoßtrupp, cannot act differently. We are convinced that sooner or later the hour will come for all of us when those who are against us today will join hands with us in the true national community under the leadership of Adolf Hitler."

The result of this so-called "Small Hitler Trial," which lasted five days, was that all the defendants were sentenced to prison terms ranging from one year and three months to two years. However, in recognition of the honorable motives of the convicted men, the court saw fit to suspend the start of the sentences and to grant us an immediate "probationary period" while lifting some of the outstanding arrest warrants. Adolf Hitler followed the course of this trial against his Stoßtruppmen with great interest. Many years later, he mentioned this in one of his great speeches to the German people:

"I was overwhelmed," he said*, 'when I saw the first report of this trial and when I read in the 'Münchner Post', which was delivered to our cells at the time, 'The Stoßtruppen are just as insolent and brazen as their lord and master.' Then I knew: Germany is not lost; its spirit will triumph, and they can no longer stamp it out. And the Stoßtrupp men later became the largest organizations of the German movement, the SA and the SS - the spirit has remained and has proven itself ten thousand, a hundred thousand times, over and over again."*

Imprisoned

“There is only one thing that is truly important in this world:
endurance, tolerance, and persistence!
No matter how cruelly fate mocks you,
bear it if it cannot be changed;
only remain faithful, and remain firm!”

- **Frederick the Great**

Munich, May 21st, 1924

Dear Comrade!

“I have just received reliable information from one of our lawyers that the public prosecutor, acting on a complaint from the “Münchner Post”, has applied to have the suspended sentence that the People's Court granted us revoked, on the grounds that it is in the “public interest” that we should serve our sentences. I don't expect much from the countermeasures that our lawyers have initiated in agreement with our parliamentary faction, and so I am preparing for a general reunion in the Fortress in the near future. With a salute and a handshake!”

Your loyal comrade,

Paul Hirschberg

According to the legal instruction given to us by the presiding judge of the Munich People's Court, a suspension of the granted probation period was out of the question. It had been expressly emphasized that the judgment could not be appealed against, neither by the defendants themselves nor by the public prosecutor. Moreover, in the opinion of our defense and our expert comrade Candidate of Law Hermann Fobke, the granting of the probationary period was an integral and indispensable part of the judgment itself. With the highest degree of trust in the world, I really could not imagine that the “public” would be so interested in the execution of the sentence we had been given because, during the night of November 8th-9th, we had unfortunately only partially destroyed the printing press and publishing house of the “Central Organ of the South German Social Democratic Party,” the “Münchner Post.” On the contrary, the signs indicated that the “public” had a completely opposite interest.
Apparently, it still vividly regretted that our laudable intention of completely eradicating this Marxist hotbed, known in many circles as the “Münchner Post,” had not been carried out more thoroughly. The true words of the then President of the Reich Court, Dr. Erwin Bumcke, that under the system of the time the German judiciary had become a "prostitute of politics", had not yet been spoken. Therefore, unfortunately, I did not yet know that at that time the term “public” was understood to mean only the interests and concerns of the black-red coalition.

I did not let Paul Hirschberg's letter spoil my good mood. Nevertheless, I decided to call my comrade as soon as possible, and I did so the very next day. I was somewhat shocked to realize that Hirschberg’s prediction had not been entirely ludicrous, as I, the unsuspecting layman, had been all too willing to accept. Rather, everything pointed to the fact that I would soon have to be convinced of the accuracy of this notice out of necessity and from my own experience.
Rather unbalanced, I put down the receiver and went home, lost in thought. In my mind, I began to come to terms with the changed situation. Finally, as a result of my deliberations, I decided to let the announced events, in whatever form they might occur, come to me in peace.
And they came, sooner and faster than I even remotely suspected at the time.

Three days after that revealing phone call, I was cycling towards my apartment at noon. Working in the morning hours had given me an appetite, and that sped up my pace. Roast pork with sauerkraut and mashed potatoes was my favorite dish, which my wife had carefully prepared for me that day, which made me very happy. Gratefully, I thought of my wife and looked forward to being with her soon. Once at home, I barely had time to put my bike in the shed and stormed up the stairs to my apartment. Unpleasant smells hit me from the open kitchen door. My eyes fell on the smoking, hissing stove. Charred meat scraps in bubbling, blackish fat gave me reason to fear the worst for the longed-for roast pork. I called my wife's name. Only a suppressed sob met my ear. I rushed into the living room and stopped in surprise. Crouched in the large armchair opposite me, I found my wife in tears. She pointed to the newspaper lying on the table, the "Münchener Neueste Nachrichten". A red-bordered note glowed towards me. It read:

"As the press office of the State Ministry of Justice has informed us, the Higher Regional Court has lifted the probationary period granted to the National Socialists convicted in the Stoßtrupp Hitler trial, and ordered the execution of the sentences pronounced due to their decisive role in the occupation and cordoning off of the Bürgerbräukeller, in the destruction of the "Münchner Post" newspaper, and in the arrest of the Social Democratic Munich city councilors, as well as in other actions, in particular in the search for the Social Democratic member of Parliament and Vice President of the State Parliament, Erhard Auer, they had shown an extraordinary degree of brutality and violence; finally, during the criminal proceedings against them, they had shown no remorse. The execution of their sentences was in the public interest."

I felt slightly dizzy reading this; my hunger for roast pork with sauerkraut and mashed potatoes completely evaporated like smoke in the wind at the surprising news.

The day dawned, evening came, and night fell. It was no different than usual. Another day came and passed like the others before it. Half a week came and went and nothing happened. No news, no summons to report for my sentence, no arrest warrant found its way to me on the southern shore of the blue Lake Starnberger. Once again, I turned the restless thoughts in my soul over in my mind until one consideration seemed to me to be the right one, the most fitting. The press release had probably only been launched in the newspapers in order to calm the hate-filled minds of some of the bigwigs of the ruling system and their "public opinion" accomplices by publishing it.
Because I was all too happy to believe what I thought, and because the sun seemed so enticing, I quickly made new plans. The Feast of the Pentecost had arrived, and so I looked forward to carrying out a long-held intention of mine: a bicycle trip into the wide, wide world. My wife and I wanted to cycle from Lake Starnberg to Lake Constance. The route was to go via Lindenberg in Allgäu, where my ever-cheerful brother-in-law lived as the owner of a sizable pharmacy, and an even more impressive wine cellar.
On Friday afternoon, we had already passed through the cozy little town of Landsberg am Lech. It felt strange to me as we rode through gloomy gates and across the bright market square of the city towards the setting sun. Partly I felt like I was fleeing from an uncertain fate, whose clawed hands were already greedily grasping the wind-fluttering corner of my gray windbreaker, and partly I was excitedly joyful to be able to ride as a free man through God's beautiful early summer.
Out of fear of being recognized as a criminal and arrested on the open road when passing through town, my wife had taken my cap off my head at the entrance to the town, my beloved Stoßtrupp cap, which I had always worn. Only after vigorously protesting did I get my headgear back, long after the hazy Moors of Landsberg were behind us.
We climbed up onto a hill, to which the country road wound, and drove over to the wild, foaming Lech. There, not far from the opposite bank, in the reddish glow of the evening sun, lay the elongated, gray buildings of the prison. Threatening shadows darkened the buildings, which appeared even more massive and powerful as the daylight faded.

We were moved as we thought of the Führer and his loyal followers who had been forced to live within the bare walls of that place for weeks, ever since the "Great Hitler Trial". Bitterness and deep disgust filled us as we stood before the bars, losing our faith in Germany and its resurrection, as the hands of Adolf Hitler's enemies struck out against the will of the Führer and his movement.
The ever more shadowy outlines of the sprawling prison seemed to us like a great tomb, under which that honorable and valiant Germany of which Adolf Hitler had so often, so unequivocally and so confidently told us in his great speeches was buried for all time. In contrast, more alive than ever was the black, red and golden November Republic, built on perjury and high treason. Its beneficiaries, the Marxists, Freemasons and Jews, ruled with the mendacious slogan, "The people have triumphed!" They led these very people, with ringing phrases of equality and fraternity, of beauty and dignity, into the abyss in an ugly and undignified manner. They, who used the word "freedom" at every opportunity, were the ones who brutally suppressed any movement towards real freedom. They were the authors and rulers of that disastrous system that allowed Germans to shoot Germans, to mow down those front-line soldiers and hot-blooded youths who emulated them. They abused their power to put those who wanted to break Germany's chains of slavery in chains themselves, or even, as they had done with Leo Schlageter[13], to play into the hands of the enemy. While we were lost in memories of the recent past of our fatherland, a late ray of sunshine made the barred window panes of the prison building flash brightly once more.

"Just as my light triumphs over dark shadows, so will Adolf Hitler one day victoriously break through the ranks of his opponents and lead you out of the misery and disgrace of this miserable present,"

this last ray of light of the departing day seemed to want to call out to us.

We raised our hands and waved our Whitsun greetings to the Führer behind the walls, and swore there at the edge of the forest in the glow of the dawning evening red:

"Even if we have been betrayed,
And knocked about,
We knew what we must do.

We must remain true to the fatherland.
Hitler's spirit in our hearts cannot perish,
Hitler's Stoßtrupp will rise again!"

The next day, at dawn, we arrived in Lindenberg. My hospitable brother-in-law couldn't believe his eyes when he saw me standing in front of him - ever since the appearance of the press release, which I had almost forgotten about during our beautiful trip, he had suspected me of being at Landsberg Fortress. All the greater was his and his family's joy at the reunion.
To celebrate this befittingly, we soon found ourselves in the vaulted wine cellar. Together we carefully selected the bottles, covered in dust and cobwebs, whose fine juice would enhance our festive mood. In the next room, the pharmacist rummaged promisingly through the housewife's larder, where she found sides of bacon, ham and sausages, enhancing our celebratory activities.
The men, who included a few die-hard supporters of the Nazi Party from Lindenberg, drank a lot that evening. They drank in the cozy get-together in the rough and warlike language of the Allgäu region. If the "Maulkorbgeseß zum Schuß der Republik" (law that prohibited public gatherings) had not existed long before, it would certainly have been invented that very night if the unanimous opinion and mood of

[13] Leo Schlageter was a German officer and Freikorps member who participated in sabotage operations against the French during the Rhine Occupation. Captured, he was executed by firing squad and made into a martyr for German nationalists, particularly the National Socialists.

the people in this circle had reached the ears of the bigwigs and little bigwigs, who were then fearing for their offices and dignities, posts and sinecures.
The beautiful vacation days flew by. We steered our wheels homewards. The concerned head of the household received us at the door. He held out a large official envelope to me; the day before yesterday, the postman had already delivered it to him as a writ of summons. It must contain something very urgent and important, because the postman had indicated that the letter was to be handed to me personally as soon as I arrived.
I started to feel faint. My wife looked at me anxiously, questioningly, as I tore open the large yellow envelope, on the side of which the word "Penal Authority" grinned mockingly. With mixed feelings, I broke open the seal and unfolded the insert. There I read:

"With reference to the attached order of the Supreme Court in Munich, you are hereby ordered to report to the board of Fortress Landsberg within three days of receiving this summons, to begin the legally binding prison sentence of one year and three months that has been imposed on you."

The attached order, however, read in part:

Subject: The criminal proceedings against Josef Berchtold, single, merchant in Munich, and comrades for aiding and abetting high treason.

On May 16th, 1924, the Supreme State Court, Second Criminal Division, in response to an appeal by the public prosecutor against the order of the People's Court for the district of the Munich I District Court dated April 28th, 1924, ruled as follows:

Order:

"The defendants of Stoßtrupp Hitler, convicted by the People's Court for the district of the Munich Regional Court on April 28th, 1924, are, with immediate effect, denied the probationary period granted to them in the same judgment.
Reasons: the convicted persons, as participants in the operation against the "Münchner Post", have extensively damaged and destroyed property. In this operation, carried out on the orders of Hauptmann Göring, the destruction of the "Münchner Post" was the aim from the outset. The convicted persons were well aware of this order and contributed to its execution - therefore they are therefore fully responsible for all acts of destruction that occurred. Because of the brutality and violence shown, the convicts cannot be granted a probationary period. The convicts, who have not shown the slightest remorse, must be made aware of the seriousness of the criminal justice system.

Accordingly, it was ruled as follows."

Signed, Mahler. Signed, Bayerlein. Signed, Haisermann.
Munich, May 24th, 1924

Involuntarily, I thought of the word with which the presiding judge of the "Great Hitler Trial" had introduced the grounds for the verdict handed down there: "Fiat justitia, pereat mundus!"[14]
Now it was a matter of gritting one's teeth and showing that, as a follower of Adolf Hitler, one was willing to bear the inevitable as a true National Socialist should.
I knew that with the execution of the sentence, my good position was lost and my promising existence was destroyed. This impression, however, did not crush me under its weight, because higher than all these material things and questions was my loyalty to Adolf Hitler and his movement. Nevertheless, my heart

[14] Latin phrase translating to, "Let justice be done, though the world perish!"

was not light. It was not only the loss of personal freedom that mattered, but above all the fact that I had to leave my young and inexperienced wife completely unprovided for and alone to fend for herself. We had only married three weeks before November 9th, 1923. We had just returned from our honeymoon when the order to report to Munich was issued. We had not been blessed with earthly riches. Therefore, the loss of livelihood that would surely follow my imprisonment inevitably meant that my partner would also lose her bread and butter.
To have to face this fact and be powerless to counter its effects was unspeakably difficult and hard for me! And yet, a victorious thought once again dispelled the emerging despair:
You have fought with honor for your fatherland, as a fellow campaigner in a movement that, according to your beliefs, holds the future of Germany. You have done your duty on the front as you did in the long years of the war. If you are now being sent behind bars by dark reactionaries and their red satellites, you are only experiencing the same fate as many of your fellow soldiers who have faced the same trials. But you have it easier than many of them - you will be imprisoned with your Führer, sharing these months of imprisonment with him as a loyal follower, and will thus receive more from him and his nature than millions of others are granted. The day will come when you will be envied for every hour you spend with Adolf Hitler, whom you will get to know not only as a leader in good and happy times, but also as a comrade in difficult times.
These were the thoughts that helped me get over the parting.

24 hours later I had organized everything that was necessary and possible to organize for the time of my sentence; another 12 hours later I was already steaming towards the fortress.
I scanned compartment after compartment for familiar faces. Finally, in a corner of the carriage, behind a barricade of large suitcases and parquet flooring, I discovered Defendant No. 29, Hans Haug. Glad to have found a fellow traveler, I sat down with him. After a warm welcome, I learned that some of the condemned Stoßtrupp comrades had already left a few days earlier as a “quartering squad” in the direction of the fortress.
A solemn farewell party given by Party member Otto Seeländer in the “Hakenkreuzecke” (Swastika Corner) of the Fürstenhof coffee house in Munich, which had fallen into terrible disrepute among the respectable bourgeoisie since November 9th, 1923, had considerably alleviated the pain of separation and strengthened them for the coming deeds.
Other comrades had managed to secure a shorter or longer reprieve to settle personal and professional matters. Consequently, there was the hopeful prospect of being able to interrupt the monotony of our sentence with their arrival.
Soon we had reached our destination: “Landsberg am Lech! - Everyone out!” We loaded ourselves with suitcases and parcels and gasped under their load towards the fortress, bent over the Lech. The gray buildings rose up before us with hundreds of small barred cell windows. The mighty, iron-clad entrance gate appeared to us like the wide-open, dark jaws of a prehistoric monster. “The purest entrance to the underworld,” comrade Haug stated with a slight shudder. We quickly turned away from the unpleasant sight, put down our suitcases and parcels, took a deep breath of the air of freedom, and cast our eyes into the distance.
The scene, seen by me on the threshold between freedom and captivity, has been engraved in my mind forever: In the bright rays of the midday sun, the area was bathed in summer splendor. Expansive green forests lined the distant horizon. But in front of them, the green Lech River bubbled and foamed, playing with its silver-glittering waves. From the other side of the bridge, the colorfully painted houses, the red roofs, the defiant towers and the broken walls of the old, once so well-fortified city greeted us. Happy children were playing a game of tag not far from us, and to the right, on the railroad embankment, a white cloud of smoke billowed into the clear air.
We stood there for a long time, lost in silent contemplation. But then we pulled ourselves together, picked up our luggage and crossed the threshold. The gate to freedom slammed shut behind us with a dull thud.

We stood in the vault in front of the guardhouse. Prison guards in blue uniforms looked at us curiously. We answered their brief questions about where we came from and where we were going by saying that we were supposed to learn about the seriousness of the criminal justice system in the opinion of the Higher Regional Court in Munich.
The blue-coats said that this opinion could be taken into account, and before we knew it, two of them had taken us in their midst. Armed with shackles and an absurd amount of jumbling keys, they carefully escorted us to the “Senior Government Councilor,” the head of the prison. We climbed several flights of stairs, and with each step, the flashing keys rattled and clattered in time with the steps of the “Pariser Einzugsmarsch.”
In the bright, friendly hallway outside the office of the man in charge of these bars and walls, punishments and prisoners, we were made to wait for a long time, in keeping with a tradition that had become customary in many bureaucratic establishments, even at the tax office. This was nothing new - as front-line soldiers, we had already experienced the truth of the old saying: “The soldier spends half his life waiting in vain!” Only after this wait were we allowed in.
The admission formalities were completed pleasantly and quickly; there we signed a declaration to refrain from any escape attempt. Finally, we were given a benevolent lecture on the fortress rules and other provisions to be observed. From there we went through echoing corridors, between whose thick walls the spectre of grey monotony cowered, chuckling to itself, through rattling iron sliding doors, past barred windows, over cold stone tiles, incessantly followed by the tireless clanking of large bunches of keys and surrounded by the lurking sergeant's eyes, which could be felt nearly physically.
We arrived at a kind of forecourt, which was located at the end of a wall reinforced with pointed turrets. On the right was the “garden”. A gravel path ran through it. A knee-high sign with the word “Border” driven into the ground at the beginning of the path aroused my curiosity. In response to my question to one of the sergeants, I was told that this sign marked the outermost boundary to which the fortress prisoners were allowed to venture.

We had now reached the end of the path, which opened into a large gravel-strewn square.
There we were greeted by a truly hellish shouting: “Access! Hail to you, new palefaces!”. Seconds later we were surrounded by a bunch of shouting and gesticulating fellows. All of them were only wearing shirts, sports trousers and shoes. They shook our hands, hugged us, snatched our suitcases and packages from us, all at once, and started talking to us in a single mighty voice, and then many of them charged off like the wild hunt; only some had stayed with us and led us in triumph into the building that rose up beyond the gravel square, the actual prison.

On the ground floor, in the office, in the room of the constable on duty, calm finally set in. Only now did we have a chance to shake hands with the joyfully excited men of the “quartering squad” who had greeted us so warmly. Our luggage had also been brought here. It was thoroughly and carefully checked to see if it contained anything dangerous to the state or even tools that could be used to escape.
While this highly embarrassing examination was still in progress, several new men burst into the cramped room with a loud rumbling noise, and before long I found myself separated from my comrade Haug, pushed forward, dragged up a stone staircase, and back onto the first floor. I was hurried through a dark corridor and into a large, surprisingly bright room. This was Cell No. 11, the apartment that the state had provided to me free of charge for the next few months.

Still out of breath from the whirlwind welcome, I set out to inspect my new abode; here I was interrupted at the very beginning of this useful and natural activity by Defendant No. 2, Emil Maurice. He greeted me with a hearty handshake and ordered me to report to the Führer in person without delay. Here, too, the old National Socialist spirit and the familiar military order prevailed, with the henchman first called before his leader. That made me feel at home, and glad about that, I walked with Maurice through the echoing corridor to Adolf Hitler's cell.

My heart was beating mightily in my chest. I had not seen the Führer since that memorable noon of November 9th, 1933, when he was preparing to march to the Feldherrnhalle - now I was to meet him face to face under very different circumstances.
I shall never forget how my initial shyness vanished under the Führer's kind gaze. Today I no longer know what Adolf Hitler said and spoke to me about in detail at the time - I was so completely under the spell of his personality and the impression of that hour that I was unable to grasp and remember words. The Führer inquired in detail about my personal and economic circumstances and those of my family. I felt that his warm, sympathetic words expressed sincere, comradely concern for my profession and the welfare of my family. I honestly did my best not to burden the Führer, who, as I knew, was constantly thinking of his comrades, followers and the future of the movement, with my small personal needs and worries. A strong handshake accompanied the heartfelt and heartfelt words of encouragement.
I left with the renewed awareness that in Adolf Hitler I had found the man and the leader to whom I would remain sworn for the rest of my life, and whom I would follow blindly wherever he might lead me.

After that I reported to the “field marshals”, firstly Lieutenant-Colonel Hermann Kriebel, the military leader of the Combat League, and then to Dr. Friedrich Weber, the leader of the Oberland League, both of whom had been inmates of the fortress since the Great Hitler Trial.
I was cordially received as if I were among a circle of long-time trusted comrades and friends, and finally returned to my room, No. 11, full of new and powerful impressions, where I enjoyed a cup of coffee with schnapps and bread and jam with my fellow cellmates.

The Fortress and its Occupants

“We will master our destiny by believing in Germany...!”
- **Adolf Hitler, September 12th, 1923**

Landsberg am Lech, which today has a population of around 10,000, was founded by Henry the Lion at the same time as Munich. It is one of the most interesting towns in old Bavaria. Located in the Alpine foothills, it formed as early as the Middle Ages for the only 60-kilometer-harvested provincial capital, the bulwark against Swabia. A richly forested, rugged slope to the Lechniederung encloses the town on the Oftseite like a protective rampart. Tall towers on old churches and many massive gate buildings stand defiantly out of the swarm of partly medieval-style townhouses. The old town has numerous romantic lanes and alleys that lead to the friendly market square, where the town hall, with its old, pure stucco facades is particularly eye-catching. Colorful frescoes shine from the gables. Ornate gates, decorative balconies and baroque bay windows beautify the cityscape. Cheerful inn signs invite you to stop in. On tall chimneys, the stork clatters in his nest. Flower-filled gardens behind wrought-iron railings and colorfully painted benches in front of the houses convey to the hiker that cozy, quiet staidness that is characteristic of the peaceful small-town life. Green ivy and yellow gorse entwine the centuries-old city wall, and wild twining plants slither around battlements and arrow slits.
Beyond the market square, the waters of the Lech, a raging mountain river that rises in the Lechtal Alps, flow around the city center and rush toward the Danube in a wild course. On the other side of the river, a few hundred meters inland, stands a long, walled structure that rises abruptly from the flat Lech valley floor: Landsberg Fortress.

Anyone who thinks they will find a whiff of the romance of old, moss-covered fortresses with damp casermates, dripping vaults, gloomy ramparts, muddy ditches, eternally bitter and coarse commanders and drowsy sentries here will be bitterly disappointed. The romanticism has long since vanished since the time when the fortress, which was previously intended for political prisoners of Bavaria, the fortress “Oberhaus”, situated on a towering rock above the three-river city of Passau, was abandoned.
Landsberg Fortress is one of Germany's more modern penal institutions and was built around the year 1900 as a purely functional structure. It is designed to hold approximately 500 criminal prisoners. A small house, once the prison labor building, is directly incorporated into the prison area. It was comprised of 14 rooms. Corresponding crossways connect it to the penal prison. Before the events of November 9th, 1923, the only inmate to have been held there for any length of time was Count Arco-Valley, who in 1920 had liberated Bavaria from its then traitorous Prime Minister, the Polish Jew Kosmanovsky, alias “Kurt Eisner”.
The prison cells we were assigned, built on average for only one person, were, similar to the cells for criminal prisoners, eight paces long and four paces wide. They received their light through a normal-sized window, which was closely barred with strong square iron. The rooms were furnished with a metal camp bed with simple cushions, a bedside table, a table with a standing or hanging lamp, a chair and a wardrobe. While the cupboard was kept in a brown tone, the remaining furniture had white lacquer paintwork, reminiscent of a military hospital or sickbay. The unexpectedly large influx of fortress prisoners, which resulted from the abolition of our probationary period, far exceeded the capacity of the small building. Consequently, wherever possible, the single rooms had to be occupied by two inmates - it was as cramped and confined as on a torpedo boat setting sail for distant shores.

Cell No. 11 still offered some space, although after I moved in, instead of the intended four, five men now occupied it. Defendant No. 38, Josef Gerum, was the senior inmate in charge of this room. By profession he was - the pen almost refuses to write this fact, which was hardly comprehensible to the state authorities at that time - a criminal assistant and thus a civil servant of the Munich Police Headquarters - so far had the virus of our subversive worldview already penetrated the body politic that the pillars of the political system, the police, instead of fighting the notorious “swastika supporters” to the death as they were

duty-bound to do, made common cause with them in the most unprofessional manner. Despite all the reproaches and harassments of his allegedly so benevolent superiors, this Gerum had become a member of the Stoßtrupp and remained loyal to it despite his extremely endangered position as a civil servant. Moreover, he had even had the incredible audacity, unprecedented in the glorious history of the Bavarian police, to mislead his colleagues in the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich on that memorable evening of November 8th, 1923 by deceptively showing his secret police badge, thus paving the way for Adolf Hitler to reach the speaker's platform unhindered.
Prisoners No. 33, Otto Reichart, No. 12, Berthold Fischer, No. 20, Paul Hirschberg, and myself, No. 4, were under the command of this remarkable traitor.
Otto Reichart, a postal official, was living proof that our “subversive” activities were not limited to the purview of the Ministry of the Interior alone, but had even found a field of activity in the service of the good Bavarian People's Party postal minister, Dr. Schätzel; was it any wonder, then, that the highly commendable State Ministry of Education and Culture also had to bury its promising candidate in embarrassment? Berthold Fischer, an actor of talent, whom no one had seen as a wolf in sheep's clothing, had been the one to disappoint his well-meaning supporters so callously. Paul Hirshberg had taken a similar line, as shortly before that he had been seen as a promising newcomer to the German National Association of Commercial Agents.

Five of our rooms were furnished as solitary confinement cells; by removing the partition walls and combining several single rooms, it had grown to its present size. The prison administration had carried out the expansion project not on its own initiative, but on the basis of higher instruction.
During the days of the “Great Hitler Trial,” the Ministry of Justice ordered the conversion of a suitable, somewhat more pleasant and comfortably furnished room to accommodate “His Excellency General Erich von Ludendorff,” since his conviction was secretly desired and thus expected in the high ministry. A wine-red plush curtain was to be hung down the middle to divide the room into a living and sleeping area, and more appropriate and better furniture was to be installed.
Contrary to his explicitly stated will and against the expectations of the Berlin informers and other dark forces pulling the strings, General Ludendorff was acquitted - only then did it come about that instead of the victor of Tannenberg and greatest general of the World War occupying this space, only five unknown Stoßtruppmen moved into Cell No. 11, and it was unnecessary to buy a new plush curtain and to burden the budget of the institution's administration with expenses for special furnishings.
This history had given our room a certain historical aura, and that is why it was called “His Excellency’s Room” - although we, its inmates, were anything but excellencies, living in a room that had previously been intended for a special purpose may have initially had a beneficial influence on our daily habits. In any case, we unanimously agreed with the suggestion of our comrade, the prospective Candidate of Law Hermann Fobke, who was to be the sixth occupant of the cell a few days later, that he would prove himself worthy of the original purpose of our dwelling by daily wearing our cleanly washed collars. The realization of this proposal got stuck in the first few attempts, because wearing white collars was just too uncomfortable for us rough-and-tumble Stoßtruppen in the long run, but it did earn us the nickname “white collar proletarians”.

The size of the room was particularly advantageous for us. Because in it, in pleasant contrast to the crowded conditions of the other detention rooms, more than five people could stand together at once, we often had long visits from our comrades, and because the visitors always took great pains to provide us with the latest fortress news, we learned almost everything, day after day, that had happened within the walls, both large and small.

On the first floor, to the left of the staircase, was the so-called “General’s Wing”. It housed the Führer and his deputies, Lieutenant Colonel Hermann Kriebel and Dr. Friedrich Weber. The aforementioned Emil Maurice served as the liaison between the commander and the Stoßtruppen.

The Führer's room was numbered seven, like his party membership card. It was just as simply furnished as the other fortress rooms - only a typewriter, stacks of books, magazines and newspapers, and pot-bellied files gave the room a special character.
In front of the generals' rooms was a larger antechamber, whose comfort was enhanced by the addition of a "cozy corner", featuring a folding screen, wicker furniture, a wall clock, and a few framed art prints on the wall. There was also a small stove in a niche.
At first, Maurice tried to indulge in fine cuisine here. However, the bubbling and hissing and the unpleasant smells from his workshop all too often brought tears to the eyes of the generals and drove them out of the smoke-filled room. These well-meaning efforts were soon put to an end. This was very unfortunate, especially since the capable chef had always taken great pains to bring the most delicious dishes to the generals' table, and we still remember his cooking skills with pride.

The "General's Wing" with its peaceful tranquility was considered neutral territory by us, which is why we rarely dared to invade it. The generals rewarded this consideration with numerous invitations to a little "chat," so that one or more of us would sit together with the Führer or one of his generals in a cozy corner, discussing the events of the day.
The "Rough Landsknechts"[15] occupied half of the ground floor. Their leader was Edmund Schneider, a champion boxer from Munich. His group included the quiet but profound former state police constable Emil Hamm, Defendant No. 9; the equally handsome and shy merchant Alois Rosenwink, Defendant No. 27; the brave Johann Haug, who played the violin more with love than with artistry, Defendant No. 29; the Giesinger Höh'[16] , always ready for a fight or a rant, the master butcher Karl Hutter, Defendant No. 8; his like-minded friend and loyal shadow, the gnarled servant Michael Steinbinder, called Michel, Defendant No. 19; the clever and sophisticated merchant Emil Danneberg, Defendant No. 23; the dreamy and introverted Josef Feichtmayr, Defendant No. 28; his younger brother, the quietly contented baby of the fortress' prisoners, Otto Feichmayr, Defendant No. 22; and finally, the constant terror of the old prison doctor and the on-duty sergeants, laborers, dog breeders and catcatchers, Franz Fröschl, known as Frosch[17], Defendant No. 39.

Frosch spent most of his time hidden away in his room, like a mole in its burrow. Lying lazily on his bed, he smoked countless cigarettes, their dense clouds of blue smoke generally enveloping the dog breeder and catcatcher's dwelling in a ghostly twilight. When he had no more to smoke, Frosch would get up from his pile with a groan and walk back and forth between the ground floor and the upper floor, functioning as our living newspaper. When he was in this state, you could get reliable information and excellent news about the most secret plans and strangest conspiracies hatched in the circle of "Rough Landsknechts" from him in exchange for cigarettes.

To the right of the antechamber of the "General's Wing" on the second floor, a narrow hallway led to the "consulting rooms" where we prisoners were allowed to receive visitors in accordance with the regulations of the fortress, which will be explained later. To the right of this corridor, separated from it by a ledge in the wall, was the so-called "day room", an elongated space with four windows. Adjoining this was a dark, windowless corridor that provided access to the detention rooms on the first floor on the west side. The furnishings of the day room consisted of several tables scrubbed to a shine and arranged in a "T" shape, along with its associated chairs and benches, and a large cast-iron stove suitable for warming food and drinks.

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[15] "Landsknechtes" were German mercenaries used during many European conflicts from the 15th to 17th century.
[16] Bit difficult to translate to English; "Giesinger Höh" is related to a high spot near Munich made famous by a painting done by Carl Friedrch Heinzmann in 1838; I am assuming that its another name for the "Giesinger Berg", a hill overlooking Munich. Its usage here likely insinuates that Karl Hutter is the "peak". This one took a while to figure out but there's not much more information, even in German, so if I made a mistake, my apologies.
[17] "Frosch" means frog in German.

The day room offered space for everyone and for every activity that the confinement of the cells did not allow; therefore, we also took our meals here together, and it also served our purpose for our "comradeship evenings" that were introduced later. When the weather did not permit us to stay outside, the room served as a lecture hall in which our ideological lessons and political debates, called "palaver"[18] by Lieutenant Colonel Kriebel, took place.

The next single room was occupied by a very special man, the municipal administrative assistant Karl Fiehler, called Karlchen, Defendant No. 25. He was always in good humor and ready to introduce us to the most intimate secrets of municipal and communal self-government at any time of the day or night. He was also a master at giving us good advice for future dealings with the municipal lending office - as a former official of this company, which had flourished so greatly during the inflationary period, Karl Fiehler knew its business practices very well from personal experience. He described his Sisyphean labor in the fight with the nine-headed dragon, called "municipal bureaucracy," in a particularly vivid and realistic way. In doing so, he displayed such profound and in-depth expertise in all municipal issues and matters that we agreed at the time to propose our comrade Karl Fiehler as the only suitable candidate for the office of Lord Mayor of the future Capital of the Movement.[19]
In the immediate vicinity of this unwavering champion of National Socialist municipal administration, who was constantly occupied with solving municipal tasks and problems and whose intellectual alertness often made him forget the bars on his window, the newly married merchant Friedrich Geißelbrecht, Defendant No. 32, tried to reflect on the transience of earthly happiness. He had been torn away from the middle of his honeymoon and brought behind the Swedish curtains[20] harshly and ruthlessly; there the poor man sat, and when his neighbor's thoughts flew out of the narrow fortress room into the offices of the city council chambers, he undertook the not always easy task of leading the unswerving man back into harsh reality. In addition, Geißelbrecht had a particular penchant for animal character studies. He was excellent at imitating the behavior of clumsy chimpanzees or acting like a gorilla that had gone wild; his specialty was to waddle through the fortress rooms as a dignified penguin with a wobbling head, which provoked laughter from his comrades whenever the general mood was close to freezing. In this way, our brave penguin helped to overcome many a gloomy hour, and gave the leaders, generals and soldiers much heartfelt joy with his playful antics.

The much-used washroom and the only even more frequently used and therefore constantly occupied bathtub were also located in this western wing of the building.
In keeping with the nature and habits of our wild bunch, our rooms and corridors were usually loud and noisy. By contrast, within the "General's Wing", there was a pleasant silence, as befits the circle of seasoned generals. This silence was seldom broken, except when the Führer's sonorous voice was heard dictating or when Maurice, the incorrigible, or some other comrade who knew how to type, was busily clattering away at the typewriter, typing out the shorthand draft of the Führer's world-famous book 'Mein Kampf', the gospel of the movement.

As time went on and the other men, one after the other, arrived seeking shelter for their prison sentences, the long overdue expansion of the fortress rooms could no longer be postponed. The frugal administration solved this problem in its own way - after a few minor structural changes, the basement of the prison wing nearest to our building was made available for the new arrivals. The former prisoners' cells were given a friendly, colorful coat of whitewash and received folding benches and tables, the same furniture as our rooms. The prisoner's bed, which was strapped to the wall during the day, was left down permanently. The heavy cell doors were left open, and the solid bars in front of the small windows were bashfully covered

[18] "Palaver" meaning both a general meeting and long, laborious talks.
[19] Karl Fiehler was indeed later made Mayor of Munich from 1933 to 1945.
[20] "Schwedischen Gardinen" is a colloquial German term for prison cell bars, as German grilles used to be made with Swedish steel.

with ornamental bulls-eye windowpane. To top off the official accommodation, each prisoner was even given two rooms: a living room and a bedroom. But even the most colorful whitewashing and the most beautiful bulls-eye glass panes were unable to suppress the foul prison stench, which, with its constant presence, still hung oppressively in the cell block.

Reluctantly, but bowing to the pressure of superior force, Hermann Fobke, called Hermännchen, Defendant No. 21, had also joined the other descendants. His cradle stood in Pomerania. His father's house was in Stettin. He had therefore persistently, but in vain, sought to serve his sentence in the local fortress of Gollnow, knowing full well that in the then Prussian state, the old fortress rules, which had long since been abolished in Bavaria and only slightly restricted the personal freedom and sense of honor of the prisoner, were still in force. He arrived at our place railing against the unyielding Bavarian penal authorities and was armed with a suitcase full of legal tomes. He scrutinized the available rooms with a critical eye. The result of his inspection was his unshakable decision to honor Cell No. 11 with his presence. All the evidence of the increasingly intolerable conditions and all the well-intentioned counter-proposals bounced off his Pomeranian stubbornness without effect. Hermännchen did not waver. He called on the generals for help, and finally even dared to seek a personal decision from the Führer. Thus strengthened, he asserted his will.
The insightful Berthold Fischer and the lonely Otto Reichart decided to give the steadfast intruder from the Baltic Sea coast his space. They packed up their beds and wandered over to other cells. With the other men housed there, they then founded the “Zellenbauer” (cell builders) Comradely Society.
But Berthold Fischer had learned from Hermännchen's will to assert himself and simply reclaimed the functions of the previous representative of the cell builders, which had previously been held by the widely traveled Wilhelm Briemann, Defendant No. 15, for himself. Briemann, who in his civilian job was a “Kanone”[21] in the production of pencils and other useful office supplies, with his characteristic obliging smile, readily conceded the controversial position of representative to the more robust Berhold Fischer.

The western side of the fortress was “forbidden territory” for us prisoners. Our guards, a 50-man strong police unit, had set up camp there. Thick walls separated us from them. The fact that we had our own entrances to the quarters and the guard rooms ensured that we did not come into contact with the state police - there was too much fear that the poisonous germs of the National Socialist idea would also penetrate into the harmless souls of these brave servants of the holy "Hermandad"[22] and put their vigilance to sleep. The task of this unit and its commanding officer was to set up guard posts and patrols in a wide radius to detect any attempts at escape in good time, whether they came from inside or outside, and to suppress them by force of arms. Machine guns and hand grenades, machine pistols and other instruments of murder were amply available to carry out these tasks.
High walls, heavy iron gates and solid bars cut us off from the world of freedom. Prison guards suspiciously watched our every move. Complex alarm systems encircled our confined living space. Guards and patrols roamed the grounds inside and outside the wall. The carefully thought-out guard and surveillance system was coordinated to cover all possibilities. The rulers of the black, red and gold Weimar Republic and their backers in the Free State of Bavaria were very much afraid of the simple corporal of the World War, Adolf Hitler, and his “fanatical followers”. That is why, in response to a particular alarm signal, the Reichswehr artillery department garrisoned in Lansberg was called in to reinforce the guards.
The defenceless prisoner, however, whose guarding was the main purpose of this unusual deployment of the state's power apparatus, said something at the time that was far-sighted and prophetic:

“What is lacking in weapons for freedom
must always be replaced by willpower!”

[21] Colloquial German term for “hotshot”.
[22] Spanish term for “brotherhood” or “fraternity”.

And about a decade later, under Adolf Hitler's leadership, this willpower enabled the entire German nation to break far stronger chains than those that kept him and us imprisoned in the fortress.

Adolf Hitler and His Generals

“We all shared only one thing: an unbridled love for our people, and an unshakable belief in its resurrection.”

- **Adolf Hitler, at the 1937 Nuremberg Rally**

On April 1st, 1924, Adolf Hitler began his five-year term of imprisonment. Four months and two weeks of the protective custody imposed on him since November 11th, 1923, and later remand custody, were to be credited to this term of imprisonment according to the court ruling. Shortly before the first Stoßtruppen arrived at the fortress, the Führer had celebrated his 35th birthday.
It is not the purpose of these memoirs to give a biography of one of the greatest figures in German history, the creator of Greater Germany. That is the task of more qualified men, worthy of the most eloquent of all German poets.
None of his fellow prisoners can report on the thoughts and feelings that may have dominated Adolf Hitler's period of external adversity and powerlessness. Only the man himself can do that, whose decisions at that time determined a small, narrow life, just as much as it does today for the lives of the entire German nation, and beyond that, for the lives of all the nations of Europe. Adolf Hitler's unique personality visibly and tangibly towered above the small and great minds that were privileged to share his captivity with him.
He was always both our leader and our teacher. We submitted willingly and unquestioningly to his absolute authority on our own accord. It was often difficult for us earthbound, average people to follow his lofty thoughts. His will was our law. His wish was our command. His word was our gospel. His energy determined our will. His faith inspired us. His thoughts took root in our souls. We listened to his speeches with enthusiasm and strove to emulate him as far as we were able.
He was a comrade among comrades, and yet at the same time he remained our leader. There was an invisible but natural distance between us and him, which even the roughest of his fellow soldiers would never dare to overstep. This was already expressed in the respectful title we used when we spoke of Adolf Hitler among ourselves. The only correct word, “the Führer,” was not yet in our vocabulary. We said “the Chief” to each other when we meant Adolf Hitler. No other term was familiar to us at that time, other than this title, which arose from this private relationship of subordination and leadership, and was dictated to us by the inner respect and great esteem for the authority of the man whom we voluntarily followed.

Adolf Hitler's daily routine was essentially the same as ours. He devoted all the time that was left to him after his many visitors in the early days and his later work on his book, in addition to studying his library, which comprised many volumes of historical and literary works, to us, to educating and instructing us in his rich body of thought.
With an almost fascinating matter-of-factness, he prophesied the coming of the Third Reich in those days of deepest powerlessness. He spoke of his will to create mighty architectural monuments and monumental works of art that would bear everlasting witness to the culture and creative will of our time, and our generation for millennia to come.
With eloquent words, he explained to us his plans, which had already been cast in concrete, for Germany's accelerated motorization; measures were intended to be taken to enable the German people to quickly make up for our backwardness in this field compared to other nations, and even more, to overtake them. Gigantic concrete roads of previously unimaginable proportions, closely integrated to the respective landscape, would be built, along with enormous bridges. These modern roads would criss-cross the Reich, from district to district, from city to city, and their use would be reserved for fast motor vehicles.
At that time, Adolf Hitler already spoke of his irrevocable decision to rebuild the German armed forces on land, at sea and in the air, stronger, more internally consolidated and better armed than ever before. He introduced us to his far-sighted foreign policy ideas, which at that time already envisaged the restoration of the ability to form close-knit alliances, with the acquisition of loyal friends and reliable allies from among the peoples of the world as his main points.

His gaze was directed primarily to the south, to the great nation of Italy, throbbing with a strong will to live and to assert itself, with which we have been connected by so many historical ties for thousands of years. He wanted to reunite the old cultural circles of the Germanic and Roman peoples, who had exchanged and complemented each other over the course of thousands of years of shared history and had given the rest of the world so many and such diverse intellectual values and cultural advances, and bring them together again for a new rebirth, thus bringing about the committed peace of Europe.
Some of Adolf Hitler's thoughts and plans seemed to us, his followers, who were still naive at the time, to be a future that could never be realized. And yet what was then tangibly vivid in the mind of the man who accomplished the miracle of Germany's resurrection has today become our indisputable reality. Only Adolf Hitler's dogged persistence and unshakable faith in the future enabled him to implement so quickly and ingeniously those great plans and ideas that went far beyond our own limited imagination.

Despite everything, even Adolf Hitler sometimes had difficult hours. Distressing news about internal party events, about disunity and apathy to certain vital political requirements, reached him in the form of numerous letters and visitors. Deep worry lines then furrowed his forehead and clouded the shine of his eyes. He never spoke to us about what was bothering him. He rarely discussed it with his generals. He usually locked his worries and sorrows deep within his soul, fought them alone, and dealt with them himself.
Adolf Hitler bore the restrictions of the deprivation of his liberty calmly and with composure. Never did an angry or spiteful word cross his lips. He submitted to the often drastic provisions of the fortress laws with a manly, soldierly attitude. He was always polite, but firm, in his dealings with the officials of the detention center and the penal system. He strictly avoided any unpleasant confrontation with them. He limited his dealings with the constables and officials to the unavoidable minimum.
Thus Adolf Hitler remained, as he had done before his imprisonment, an example to us and a guiding light, even within captivity. The police officers and officials of the fortress, for their part, endeavored to respect his authority which they also took for granted through tactful behavior. With a mixture of shyness and respect they approached this man, who was likely a mystery to them at the time.

Adolf Hitler took special care to maintain and develop the spirit of camaraderie and solidarity among his fellow prisoners. No effort was too much for him. Only very rarely did he have to exercise his leadership qualities on our behalf; when it came to disputes or differences between his followers, however, which were an inevitable consequence of months of living together in captivity, he did not shy away from taking a firm and clear stand and calling the offender to account. An unwilling rumble resonated in his voice, and that was enough to bring everyone back to their senses in a flash.

The Führer was also interested in our visitors. As often as possible, or as soon as the supervising sergeant gave the appropriate signal, our wives and immediate family members were able to see the man whose fate was linked to ours, for a brief greeting. These moments remain a proud memory for the rest of their lives.
The extent to which Adolf Hitler's very existence and the radiance of his being and his will fundamentally influenced the course of our days and months of shared imprisonment, the way he lived and strove in our midst at that time, runs like a red thread through all the experiences related below, whether they were serious or light-hearted in nature.

Defendant No. 8, directly next to Adolf Hitler's room, was occupied by the retired lieutenant colonel and field marshal Hermann Kriebel. His life had been an uninterrupted chain of commitment to Germany and its world standing; as a young lieutenant, he had taken part in the Boxer Rebellion in China and had been there when the English Admiral Lord Seymour's famous words were uttered: “The Germans to the front!” Lieutenant Colonel Kriebel had many wonderful stories to tell about that time. He gave a captivating account of mysterious temple buildings, in which massive golden Buddha statues, with heads that wobbled, were enthroned, of many a man and woman wearing traditional headdresses and their strange

doings, and of dapper mandarins with three or more buttons. He had been appointed to the War Academy early on, but then resigned from it to rejoin the 2nd Company of the Royal 22nd Infantry Regiment "Prince Wilhelm of Hohenzollern", with which he went into action in August 1914 from Zweibrücken in the Palatinate as captain and company commander. He soon joined the General Staff and later became one of General Ludendorff's closest and most trusted colleagues in the Operations Department of the Supreme Army Command. After the war, he organized the home guard in Bavaria. After its dissolution, he found his way to Adolf Hitler, under whose political leadership he took over the military command of the national defense associations, the Stoßtrupp of the NSDAP, the Oberland League and the Reichskriegsflagge, which were then combined in the German Combat League, in September 1923. His wealth of military experience was enormous. His stories gave us a deep insight into the enormous amount of work, performance and responsibility of the former German Supreme Army Command, General Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg and his Chief of Staff Erich von Ludendorff.
Just as Hermann Kriebel, as a young first lieutenant and father of cadets, had taken care of the well-being of his ensigns and cadets entrusted to his training, so now he devotedly looked after us rough-and-ready Stoßtruppen. Our various needs always found the full understanding of our fatherly friend, whom we had gratefully christened "Papa Kriebel". Himself a husband and father of two adolescent sons and daughters, he was particularly aware of the heavy burden of captivity on the married men and fathers among his fellow prisoners. His unfailingly good and truly golden sense of humor cheered us up and made us happy. He was never a party pooper. He was receptive to all our funny pranks, joined in with a mischievous twinkle in his eye, and covered any unpleasant consequences with the weight of his stature and his demeanor. He was gleeful when we had outwitted the fortress laws or the prison administration, and he always laughed uproariously when he was told about a new funny adventure.
He was tireless in his concern for our well-being, presenting requests that he himself could not fulfill to Adolf Hitler with his full endorsement, and he went to great lengths to use humorous instructions to smooth out many of the rough edges and hard corners of our mercenary life without violating our sense of honor.
In a pair of genuine chamois leather knickerbockers[23], which must have been a worthy family heirloom judging by their appearance, with the burning Virginia leaf in his mouth[24] and a broad-brimmed straw hat on his head, he still stands before me today in vivid memory, like a "prosperous sahib" looking down with visible satisfaction on his rich fruit-bearing paddy fields.
He became a comrade, educator and fatherly friend to us at that time and remained our "Papa Kriebel" until his untimely death.

The next room, Cell No. 9, was occupied by a man who seemed to be the opposite of Hermann Kriebel: Dr. Friedrich Weber, the leader of the Oberland League.
He came from the pre-war German hiking movement. As an active front-line officer, he had faced the enemy with distinction. As part of the military wing of his union, the "Freikorps Oberland", he had helped to storm Annaberg in Upper Silesia and, like Lieutenant Colonel Kriebel, considered it his duty to subordinate himself and his national defense association, which at that time spread all over southern Germany and Silesia, unconditionally to the outstanding political leadership of Adolf Hitler, as the fight for Germany demanded.
Dr. Friedrich Weber was a veterinarian, a husband, and the father of several children. His manner was engaging and courteous. His heartfelt camaraderie, coming from the depths of his soul, took our hearts by storm. Slender and lanky, he had been athletically trained from an early age and was destined to be our gym and sports teacher. He never asked anything of his students that he was not willing to demonstrate himself. He never spared himself any exercise, no matter how difficult it was.
From the rich treasury of old German landsknecht songs, he taught our throats, unused to singing, the most beautiful of them. He was never impatient or morose. He took care of our physical well-being,

[23] Baggy-knee breeches popular in the early 20th century.
[24] Virginia tobacco

unnoticed, tenaciously and persistently. Wherever difficulties arose or the seeds of discord were sown, he intervened to mediate, smoothing out the rough edges of life behind bars and walls with a gentle hand. He was always ready to listen to us and help us, day or night.
His human kindness, his empathy and his unobtrusive empathy with our mental oppressions made us trust him faithfully, with not a single issue left buried. Comrade, friend and loyal Ekkehard[25] is what Dr. Friedrich Weber became for us and has remained so to this day.

All of them, the Führer, Hermann Kriebel and Dr. Friedrich Weber, became shining examples for our own lives. Their faith was our faith - their will was our will. The words that Adolf Hitler wrote in Paul Hirschberg's diary apply to all of them:

"Whenever freedom is violated, the best people always end up in prison."

[25] Meaning "faithful friend" in German, combining "Ekke", meaning "blade", and "hart", meaning "brave".

How We Spent the Morning

“When the strength to fight for one's own health is no longer there, the right to live in this world of struggle ends.”

- **Adolf Hitler, “Mein Kampf”**

It was not easy to come to terms with life behind bars; it took quite some time before we had come to terms with our monotonous existence as prisoners and had become accustomed to seeing our own will restricted to a minimum. Nevertheless, our urge to be active remained unbroken.
First of all, we endeavored to make our rooms as cozy and comfortable as possible. We met our desire for greater comfort by rearranging the beds and cupboards to suit our purposes.
To further our efforts, sympathetic relatives, who had been approached for this purpose, sifted through tablecloths, pictures, seat cushions and similar accoutrements of modern interior design. With the help of a few lampshades, whose wire construction was a product of our own ingenuity, we tried to give the cells a personal touch, so to speak. Flower lovers had their visitors bring them flowerpots and house plants, which gave the rooms a friendly and colorful glow and were lovingly and carefully tended. Thus, in noble competition, everyone did their best to contribute to the beautification of their living quarters.

The display of political symbols, flags and pictures from the history of the movement was, of course, strictly forbidden and subject to additional disciplinary measures, according to the official fortress rules. Of course, we were ordered to decorate the common room with a large swastika flag that had been cunningly smuggled in, along with other party emblems that had escaped inspection.
Only our innate consideration for the delicate sensibilities of our fellow human beings, common to us “dissenters”, and the commendable endeavor not to unduly burden the fortress administration by imposing additional disciplinary measures, prompted us, when the “Senior Government Councilor and Director” or one of his subordinates and other curious emissaries of the penal authorities decided on visiting, to silently stow away all outwardly visible signs of our worldview with ape-like speed. As soon as the visitor had turned his back, the symbols of offense that endangered the continued existence of the Republic were quickly retrieved and returned to their place of honor.
At the beginning, the large swastika flag in the recreation room was difficult to make disappear quickly because of its considerable size; this was eventually overcome by drilling the necessary maneuvers and by constantly assigning a “magician on duty” who was personally responsible for ensuring that the flag disappeared in good time. When visitors were on the way, the large flag would quickly roll up into the large tub in the nearby bathroom without a trace.
Our intelligence service, excellently organized by specialists in this field from our ranks, aroused the pale envy and undisguised admiration of all outsiders. It was thanks to their virtuoso teamwork that no official and therefore always unwanted visitors could embarrass us by appearing unannounced. We usually found out about such “surprise” visits much earlier than the constables on duty themselves. The obscure background to the reliable work of our secret service often caused our guards a serious headache. But they never managed to solve the mystery.

After much toil and labor, and after overcoming countless petty difficulties posed by the wiry entanglement of the fortress rules, we finally succeeded in providing our bare, sober cells with its breath-restraining window bars with a certain degree of comfort. This prompted our comrades Hirschberg and Fobke, who were easily carried away to exuberant enthusiasm, to rename Cell No. 11 as the “Thalia Tea Room”[26]. On this occasion, they insisted on organizing a festive inauguration party with all the pomp and circumstance available to us.

Fobke described the memorable event in a letter to my wife:

[26] Assuming this is named after the Greek muse Thalia, goddess of comedy and idyllic poetry.

"Today was the grand opening of our renovated 'Thalia Tea Room'. We were so proud of our fabulous interior decoration that we invited the Führer and his generals to come and see it. This request was misunderstood and taken as an "invitation" instead. Well, we quickly pulled out all the cakes we had been saving for our rainy days, boiled real Chinese tea on the Hirschberg-brand Spirituskocher[27] that had arrived just in time, and the room of the 'white collar proletarians' basked in the light of the highest grace and mercy. As we were not at all prepared for this sudden formality and were in a state of chronic embarrassment over our meagre, stale provisions, ditto for our crockery, and were eager to cover up our nakedness to the best of our knowledge and ability, the event took the form of a somewhat forced five o'clock tea. It was only interrupted here and there by an outburst of temper from our beloved boss, Adolf Hitler. For my part, I divided my attention between the cake, the tea and the generals' extremely festive cigars. Conversation suffered from the fact that people generally cannot yet get used to the sudden human proximity of the generals and the Führer, who used to stand head and shoulders above us Stoßtrupp Indians[28], and some people still have to struggle with inhibitions in this respect."

On admission to the fortress, each prisoner was given a copy of the fortress rules free of charge by the prison administration. As these house rules were listed in the inventory of every prisoner's room and therefore unfortunately could not be misused for other purposes, we curiously studied them in detail. For hours we laboriously wove our way through the seven branches of its countless paragraphs until we came to the unanimous conclusion that the rules were a downright diabolical invention.
According to Fobke's expert observation, it could only have sprung from the calcified brain of a decadent descendant of the well-known Mr. von Metternich[29]. We were particularly displeased by the detailed implementing provisions for the individual paragraphs, which could be interpreted according to whim and need, but always to the detriment of the affected prisoner.
Papa Kriebel was a specialist and scribe in researching and interpreting these elastic paragraphs. After weeks of studying the subject matter night after night, he ended up knowing his way around this labyrinth of subtle legal documents far better than their actual enforcement body, the high prison administration. Insisting on his in-depth knowledge of the subject, he waged an unsuccessful but unrelenting battle for the entire duration of his imprisonment for the allocation of a "chest of drawers" to furnish his prison room. According to the regulations, he and we were actually entitled to this disputed chest of drawers as an indispensable piece of furniture. After some initial evasions, both the prison management and the prison authorities recognized this. Nevertheless, the heroic fighter for his rights was denied the chest of drawers for reasons that have not yet been clarified. Papa Kriebel has never been able to get over this obvious violation of the law, even if decades have passed since then. As often as visitors asked the hospitable landlord at his summer residence in Hohenaschau in Chiemgau during his lifetime about that period of imprisonment in the fortress, they were told with visible indignation about the withheld chest of drawers. Like Lieutenant Colonel Kriebel because of the chest of drawers, we often had to fight lengthy battles with the prison management over this and that, sometimes lasting for days, over the interpretation of the individual paragraphed rules, some of which had not even ended when we were released.
Just how thoroughly the Führer devoted himself to studying the "house rules" is demonstrated by the copy of the fortress regulations still hanging in the Führer's cell today - cellophane now covers its individual pages, which have become brittle and inconspicuous from so much reading and studying, in order to preserve for posterity the document that had such a decisive influence over the course of our days.

The sounds of the fortress' clock ring hoarsely, announcing that the time was 6 AM. The clocks inside and outside the building, which had to be rung every hour, were stopped for the last time by the night

[27] German for "alcohol stove" or "spirit burner" - a stove that uses alcohol fuel.
[28] The word used is "Stoßtruppindianern".
[29] Klemens von Metternich, German diplomat and statesman responsible for the "Concert of Europe", three decades of relative peace and stability among the European powers following the Napoleonic Era and the French Revolution.

watch consisting of two prison guards and a police dog. Keys jingle in the locks. The corridor and floor doors creak open. The foot traffic has steadily increased.
Shortly afterwards, there is a noisy rumbling on the ground floor by the Rough Landsknechts. It's time for the morning toilet. Dressed in flowing nightgowns or colorful pyjamas, they run back and forth between the washroom and the parlors under the cheering guidance of boxing master Edmund Schneider. Bare feet stomp to the beat, the wooden-soled slippers clatter brightly in between and the boots thump the bass. The whole thing is called “morning training”.
The noisy bustle on the ground floor usually elicited a loud yawn of disapproval from us occupants of “His Excellency’s Chamber”, after which Hirschberg would mutter to himself: “Do these dreadful barbarians always have to get up in the middle of the night to rob the ‘Chief’ of his well-earned rest? I don't understand why the generals even put up with this!” In truth, however, good Paul was less concerned with Adolf Hitler's and the generals' rest than with his own. He knew as well as we did that the Führer, unlike us, was an early riser and therefore didn't resent the rough Landsknechts for their morning gymnastics. But Hirschberg, after his morning lament, turned awkwardly to the other side, and after a few minutes deep breaths announced that he had gently fallen asleep again.
We other passionate late risers were also not dazzled by the phrase “the morning hour has gold in its mouth”[30], and could not for the life of us understand the purpose of getting up early. In our earthbound opinion, this only unnecessarily prolonged each day of captivity by the hours we didn't sleep in.

At 7 a.m., the “Hausel”, prisoners imprisoned for minor criminal offenses[31], who also had to make our beds and clean our rooms, brought the morning drink, which alternated between grain coffee with lots of chicory and a little milk and even less sugar or oatmeal, sometimes also “flour soup”, so-called “stomach paste”. This was accompanied by dry bread, which we could spread with butter or jam if our financial situation allowed. If there was a shortage of money, we had such desired additions to the morning snack sent to us from home or from friends who were willing to share.
The first breakfast was generally eaten in our early morning dress. The very spoiled even stayed in bed and tempted helpful comrades to serve them, although such gluttony, which was incompatible with the seriousness of our punishment, was strictly forbidden.
After this activity, there was a lot of splashing, splashing of water and splashing about in the washroom. As there were no restrictive clothing regulations of any kind, the prisoners quickly donned the Upper Bavarian national costume, the “Kurz Wichs”[32], and were thus dressed in our “fortress fashion” in no time at all. The Führer also preferred to wear the comfortable white traditional shirt, the short leather trousers and the matching calf socks.
To complete the toilette activities, the military-style, dead-straight parting of the hair was artfully constructed using lots of water and even more oil and pomade.

While these beautification efforts were still in progress, the first visitor regularly appeared in Cell No. 11. It was usually the affectionate liaison Franz Fröschl. He entered the room with a hearty salute. With both arms buried up to his elbows in his unfathomable trouser pockets, he paced up and down our cell sniffing until he found a seat that suited him. With his knees drawn up, he would then crouch on the edge of a bed, a table, sometimes even the bedside table, his face creased in knowing folds, waiting for the usual start of the morning report.
“Well, Fröschl,” a soul from our circle, burning with curiosity, finally addressed him, ”why are you so pensive today? Were you dreaming of a new hunting dog?”

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[30] The German equivalent of “The early bird catches the worm”.
[31] “Hausel” seems to be a colloquial word; another source called “The Language of the Camps” by Jewishgen.org defines it as: “Inmate in charge of taking care of the installations”.
[32] For the life of me I could not find out what the “kurze Wichs” looks like, as there is no information about this in relation to Upper Bavarian costume. I assume it's just lederhosen.

“Don’t tease me like that at such an early hour! What do you bigshots understand about hunting dogs? You wouldn’t know the first thing about them, much less hares,” he replied disgruntled.
“Would you like a cigarette, Fröschl?” his comrade Gerum tickled him slyly.
“Gladly,” came the reply, ”but you hungry brothers don't have a heart for a poor father, who’s family is drowning in need and misery.”
“Hold your breath,” Paul Hirschberg interjected, ”we really didn't notice the slightest bit of hardship and misery on your wife's last visit here. You don't have to exaggerate like that!”
“What do you know about women?” said Fröschl, ”they don’t even know how to turn the heating on. Business is bad, the dogs are here[33] and the bailiff, heaven knows. If you had a family, you'd be horrified!”
“Cheer up Frosch, there will be other times,” Fobke now said in impeccable High German. “Smoke this excellent herb to console yourself,” he continued, and seductively held a particularly good cigarette under the nose of the dog breeder who was so agilely lamenting his suffering.
“Give it here, give it here,” said the catcatcher, while his right hand greedily reached for it. “You may be a Pomeranian-Prussian, but that's why I'm a friend of yours. If anyone should ever say a bad word about them, I'll knock him to the floor, that’s for sure.”
He spoke, picked up a match, carefully lit the cigarette and began to smoke like a chimney.
“So, Fröschl, you old scrounger, you got your smokes, but now you’ll have to tell me,” the criminalist Gerum began the interrogation. “What's new?”
Frosch spoke like a waterfall. He went on and on, faithfully reporting all the amusing and uplifting things that had happened during the last 24 hours with the generals and the Landsknechts and all the other institutional gossip he had heard from his “friends”, the “Hauseln”. Every now and then he would read out the latest letter from his distant wife or tell us something edifying from the monthly dog breeder magazine. His report was often interrupted, however, as he only talked for as long as the cigarette lasted. With the last puff, he used to break off in the middle of a word and sink into a thoughtful silence, which could only be broken by offering another “coffin nail”.
Once the interrogation was over, he usually received a number of cigarettes, depending on the importance of his news, to which every occupant of the parlor and other listeners had to contribute their share. Whistling merrily to himself, the rewarded man put the gifts he had received into the tin cans he had brought along as a precaution and immediately went to his neighbors Fiehler and Geißelbrecht to pay his respects to them as well. As soon as he had finished begging on the first floor, he quickly stuck his head through our cell door again and declared: “And now I'm going over to the generals, because I have to tell them something really important, which is none of your plaster heads' business!”
Then he slammed the door shut and shuffled off to the General's Wing, whose occupants he also usually mooched off at the coffee table, unless the vigilant Maurice managed to get rid of him beforehand by giving him a number of cigarettes as a bribe. But if he succeeded in fooling the guards and gaining entrance, he did not rest until the Führer, who often laughed brightly at the Frosch’s drollery and his reports, had received him and instructed Maurice to offer the loyal follower a reward.
Loaded down with the day's reward, Frosch then disappeared triumphantly into his cell, from which billows of blue smoke soon emerged, announcing that the dog breeder had resumed his usual activities.

As soon as the walking newspaper had left, a timid knock on the door announced the appearance of his comrade Wilhelm Briemann.
“Tell me, you men,” he opened the conversation after the morning greeting, ”don't you think that breakfast today was once again particularly light, or is it the stuffy air in our cells that makes me so hungry?”
“We hear you, comrade,” Gerum replied on our behalf, ”you're right, we're no better off.”

[33] Phrasing used is “d’ Hund san hi wor’n”, I found it very difficult to translate properly, much less the rest of the dialogue used here. I tried to be as accurate as possible.

“Hurry up then,” Gerum then turned to us, ”we can't possibly allow our Briemann to do chin-ups on an empty bread drawer.[34] As long as we still have something ourselves, no one must go hungry.”
One of us hurried to the communal larder, which we were always trying to replenish by ruthlessly exploiting good relations outside the walls.
The hungry man was given a good portion and happily set about eating it. Of all our offerings, he was particularly taken with the hard slices of Pomeranian smoked bacon. Thanks to Hermann Fobke, who was from Szczecin, we were almost always well stocked with this product of Pomeranian pig farming.
The donor of this fat was a farmer of genuine grist[35] and grain. The letters of thanks that we wrote to him at the time were kept away from prying eyes in his old tiled stove in the Leutestube[36] during the years of hard struggle for power. In 1934 he celebrated his 80th birthday, and as chance would have it, our comrade Fobke was also present at this celebration. Beaming with joy, he showed him our well-preserved letters from those fortress days. The old man said that he only had one wish left before he had to say goodbye to this world. He wanted to see the Führer in person, whose followers he had commemorated by sending them bacon. The Führer was told of his wish and it was granted. The old farmer from Pomerania was received by Adolf Hitler in the Reich Chancellery in Berlin.

The keys jangled in the locks again at 8 o'clock. The constable on duty opened the doors to the courtyard. The Führer, generals and soldiers hurried out into the open.
Under Dr. Weber's leadership, they took their turn on the parallel bars, high bar, horse and vaulting frame. The gymnastics equipment had been kindly lent to us by the Landsberg gymnastics club, and were later replaced by the institution's own equipment. Tight gymnastic exercises alternated with athletics; in between we would start with an endurance run. Discipline and order were exemplary. There was no shirking, as no man escaped Dr. Weber's sharp eyes during the morning roll call. Slowly but steadily, the difficulty of the exercises was increased and ever greater demands were made on the bones, which were becoming stiff from all the squatting. It was only many months later, when we had long been free again, that we were able to fully appreciate the absolute necessity of these morning exercises, which we often found uncomfortable and too strenuous. In fact, they were the only effective antidote to our alarmingly strong and dull indifference, and the progression of prison psychosis.
The originally voluntary participation in early morning exercise was wisely made compulsory for all prisoners by the generals; only Adolf Hitler was exempt because the shoulder injury he suffered on November 9th was still bothering him, and it required him to take it easy. Instead, the Führer usually attended our morning workout as a spectator. His words of encouragement and his frank appreciation of particularly successful performances always brought us new joy in the gymnastics exercises that built up our strength and health.
We also acquired a boxing ball, which Edmund Schneider used to teach us the art of boxing. Adolf Hitler showed a particular interest in this tough, manly sport. One day, the progress we had made in learning how to fight with our fists was to be demonstrated in a real model boxing match. In a fit of greatness, little Fobke had challenged tall Maurice to a friendly fight. However, the fight did not result in a decision and had to be broken off prematurely because a light-hearted joke almost turned into bloody seriousness. In the heat of battle, the two fighters' tempers had run so high that they had become almost inextricably entangled, against all sporting rules; therefore, it took a number of crusty spectators to separate the two fighting cocks. I have not often seen the Führer laugh as heartily as he did when the two champion boxers were presented to him after being forcibly whistled back.
The short-legged Fobke had made the stomach area of his opponent the target of fierce attacks. This had Maurice writhing like a contortionist and gasping for air like a carp washed up on dry land. Hermännchen's head and shoulders, on the other hand, were pelted with such a barrage of punches from above that his head was still pounding. His left eye had been hit with a well-aimed punch and looked

[34] Meaning essentially “working on an empty stomach”.
[35] Meaning literally grain prepared for grinding, and figuratively someone advantageous and useful.
[36] Outdated term for a lounge and dining area on a farm.

bluish-red[37]. Red threads of blood trickled from his nose, which had been hit by an elegant swing. A missed punch to the chin had crashed against his swollen lips. The steadfast fighter's blond mop of hair had ruffled upwards in the heat of the fight, giving the little man, who was wearing boxing gloves that were far too big, the appearance of little Moritz from Wilhelm Busch's delicious rascal stories.
Emil Maurice recovered surprisingly quickly. Hermann Fobke, on the other hand, needed a few days of bed rest to make the physical traces of the hard knocks disappear.
As the Führer apparently did not want to see his Stoßtruppen tearing each other apart like hungry cannibals, such experiments were forbidden for the time thereafter. We therefore immediately introduced wrestling as a substitute for boxing. Comrade Hamm, a former prize-winning wrestler, was our teacher in this martial art. Unfortunately, we were also so eager and spirited in wrestling that one day the referee himself had to be transported to bed by his over-scholarly students with a few rib fractures.
We then moved on to the highest art of self-defense, Jiu-Jitsu. But here, too, there were constant tendon and muscle strains.
Especially in the early days of our sporting studies, we mostly resembled a crowd of limping hospital inmates. The old hospital doctor, who had remained conservative enough to treat both external injuries and internal illnesses with aspirin tablets, castor oil and tincture of iodine, and who had not been able to cope with such a mass rush to his morning sick call, lost almost all joy in his job and life. He soon realized that his art of healing was inadequate and left us in the hands of his colleague, our Dr. Weber, who had to switch from veterinary surgeon to human doctor unintentionally but inevitably. He was helpfully supported by master butcher Karl Hutter. In particularly difficult cases, the dog breeder Franz Fröschl also stepped in; the latter was the subject of an uncontrollable rumor that he had once been hired as a medical guest[38] on a whaling vessel in the Arctic Ocean in his youth and wandering years. But that must have been a very, very long time ago, as was amply demonstrated by the thick bandages and the huge plasters that were usually stuck to the wrong places. The Führer also seemed to have noticed this fact, which he recorded in the sketch “The Weber Gymnastics Team” included here.

“The Weber Gymnastics Team”
Pen and ink drawing by Adolf Hitler

From the lively facial expressions and the unwavering interest with which Adolf Hitler took part in all these sports, we can conclude that he would have preferred to join our ranks himself, and that he was sorry to have to confine himself to merely watching because of his injury. At his personal suggestion, a

[37] The word used is “blaurot”, not “blaues Auge”, or “black eye” as expected.
[38] Position in the German Navy, a general medical assistant to the ship doctor or his assistant.

real “sports festival” was once held in the fortress, at which we competed in all the sports we practiced. It was held on July 18th, 1924 and was attended by the entire institution and its administration. The Führer was the chief referee and held the award ceremony and presented the prizes at the end of the fights. My first prize in the long jump was a leather-bound edition of the “Edda” with a personal dedication from Adolf Hitler.

The gymnastic exercises ended at 9 o'clock. The remaining half hour was filled with walking. There was a garden path about 200 meters long and two to three meters wide, strewn with gravel. From its lower end, the hated sign with the inscription “Grenze” (border) grinned at us mockingly. If we looked in the opposite direction, our eyes were drawn to the massive three metre high, gray perimeter wall. The view to the west was blocked by the long bare front of the prison building with its many small, barred cell windows. When we turned to the east in disgust, a strangely painted wooden fence, taller than a man, came into view. We were surrounded on all sides by walls and palisades. No glimmer of the blossoming and sunny world of freedom that lay beyond the stone walls, the wall and the plank fence was able to penetrate us. Neither from the courtyard nor from the ground floor could we see out into the countryside. Only the windows on the first floor gave us such a view.
We often stood there for hours, squeezed into the narrow window recesses, gazing longingly out into freedom. Hirschberg once did this with such perseverance that he managed the feat of squeezing his head between the narrow iron bars. And when he finally tired of looking and wanted to leave the window, he could no longer free his head from the grating. Writhing, he screamed and shouted for help. His shrill cries alerted us occupants of the nearest cells. We rushed over, and with combined forces, tugging, pulling and soothing words, we finally got our comrade, who had to support our rescue maneuvers with snake-like movements of his upper body, out of his predicament. However, this was not entirely painless - Hirschberg had to sacrifice several pieces of hair and skin, especially on his ears, for his desire for freedom. But it seemed to be insatiable, because the next day Paul stood behind the bars again with us and looked longingly into the distance.
Soon we knew every tree, every bush and every single bump in the ground that the view showed us. Every dust cloud that appeared, every trivial event on the lonely country road that ran through the fields not far away became an event for us. Every change, even the slightest one, that took place outside in the narrow field of vision attracted our undivided attention and aroused our keenest interest. The growth and blossoming of the corn, the greening of the meadows and forests, the shimmering of the hot summer air and many other observations gave us cause to practice our natural history, which we hadn’t thought of so intently before.

From the first floor, the strangely painted palisade wall also offered a particularly colorful picture. It had been dubbed "Aschantizaun" [Ashanti Fence][39] by Papa Kriebel, who had a knack for such artistic constructions. Its construction was based on the well-known fortress rules. Its editor had apparently overlooked a solitary paragraph dating back to the good old days, which stated:

“Prisoners in the fortress are to be carefully guarded at all times. Their actions and activities are subject to the applicable surveillance regulations. However, every effort shall be made to ensure that due consideration is given to the prisoners' sense of honor when carrying out the guarding and surveillance measures. Guarding should therefore be as 'invisible' as possible.”

[39] Possibly related to the Asante, or Ashanti Empire, a former state in modern-day Ghana that lasted from 1701 to 1901. Could relate to the wall’s color, and it would make sense that Kriebel would know of it since he had some experience travelling during the Great War. Pure speculation of course.

Before the palisade wall was built, the guarding had been all too, almost provocatively, visible. There, on the narrow path along the wall, in front of the eyes of all the prisoners, a staid Schupo[40] guard with a carbine slung over his shoulder walked gravely up and down. That was just too conspicuous!
The secret council of the generals, chaired by the Führer, decided to put an immediate end to this intolerable situation. The decision was followed by action.
With his head held high, the general and emissary Hermann Kriebel, who had been entrusted with the initiation of diplomatic negotiations, went to report to the head of the institution, conscious of his right to do so. His footsteps echoed weightily in the corridors outside the offices. When he reached the director, Papa Kriebel pulled out all the stops of his eloquence and once again plunged the entire high management into deep perplexity and poorly concealed embarrassment at his request. After the request had been neatly recorded in writing and signed by the applicant in angular script, it began its journey through the cliffs and over the abysses of the official channels, accompanied by our good wishes.
For twenty days and twenty nights, it wandered back and forth between the individual offices in Landsberg, Augsburg and Munich "for the sake of jurisdiction". After it had caused a lot of trouble and thought for many a civil servant of the higher intermediate judicial service, trainee lawyers and public prosecutors of the penal enforcement authorities, it finally landed, swollen into a big-bellied bundle of files, on the desk of some ministerial and construction councillors of the former Bavarian State Ministry of Justice. There it gave its deeply frightened clerks nightmares. Growing ever larger, it was dragged through offices and registries by panting official messengers and finally, after another twenty days and nights, it found its way back to the conference room of the prison administration as a sizable package. Here the palisade wall, smelling spitefully of carbolineum on hot days, emerged from the bundle of files, its tips sparkling so joyfully in green, yellow, blue and red.
From then on, hidden from the eyes of the fortress garrison, the police posts marched up and down behind this wooden wall, humming, and were extremely angry because they felt at least as trapped in the narrow carboline-scented space between the cement and plank wall as we did on the other side.
At the end of the wooden fence stood a defiant tower, which was connected to the guardroom by an alarm bell line. In its gloomy cavity, it concealed another police post from our honor-sensitive eyes. Only a narrow embrasure allowed him to keep an eye out for us.

One day, a comrade told us the following:
A thunderous sultriness weighed on the earth and on all its creatures. Dark clouds lined the horizon and obscured the light of the sun.
The tower guard leaned against his hatch, dozing off tiredly and probably thinking of his distant sweetheart. Suddenly, the carbine clattered loudly to the ground. The sentry flinched in dismay. But then he froze in uncanny terror. In the sulphur-yellow, fiery blaze of flashing lightning, the incarnate Satan looked in at the narrow view and stretched out his clawed hand at the man who had suddenly staggered back at the gruesome sight. The trembling guard was about to press the button to set the alarm bells ringing, when a new flash of lightning accompanied by heavy thunder tore through the darkness. In its bright flickering light, the Indian brave recognized Frosch's face, smeared all over with soot and disfigured into a hideous grimace; he had crept silently up to the foot of the tower in a blind spot, shooting up and sneering at the Schupo through the narrow lookout.
The tower post also suffered a lot in other ways. In front of its location was a water basin, built to collect soft rainwater from the gutters for watering the garden. As often as we went to chase the flies buzzing merrily on the water level, it always happened that waves of rain found their way through the hatch into the interior of the tower cavity and showered the post with a chilling gush, so that he often thought he was in the turret of a submarine that was just diving.

We spent half an hour walking monotonously up and down between the border sign and the barrier of the wall.

[40] Colloquial German term for the state police.

In the beginning we lived in the amateurish opinion that we could make the monotony of the walk more varied by singing old Landsknecht songs. But the very first test of our skills prompted the prison authorities to forbid us to continue - our singing had found all too many unprofessional followers. The inmates sang along vigorously in all the prison cells. That was not acceptable. So the singing was banned. We then tried whistling artfully, but with the same result. All the cells whistled along merrily. That didn't work at all. Whistling was also banned.

The half past nine strike of the clock put an end to our stay outside. We all retreated to the rooms and dayrooms, which had been cleaned and aired by the "Hauseln" under the supervision of the constable on duty.
After an hour and a half of outdoor exercise, our hungry stomachs demanded their due.
As a second breakfast was considered an excessive luxury according to the fortress rules and was therefore not included in the menu, we had to try to satisfy our hunger from our own supplies. Afterwards we tried to occupy ourselves in all sorts of ways.
We could borrow books from the institution library. However, very few of these works met with our approval. The majority of them were so carefully selected according to Bavarian national party tendencies that we usually put them down as soon as we read the title. Some of us therefore preferred to spend the time until lunch dealing with our often extensive correspondence. Others played a real game of "Dreimännerskat"[41], and the natives of Munich in our ranks played "Schafkopf"[42], the traditional game of their hometowns. Still others clutched the Tarot cards, and quite harmless souls amused themselves childishly with "66"[43]. The lucky ones among us often played "Die lustige Sieben"[44], "Mauscheln"[45] and "Bank"[46], or persevered with the centuries-old game of chance of the Upper Bavarian lumberjacks and mountain farmers, the "Watten"[47].
Money and money's worth were replaced by food, cigars and cigarettes.
Gerum, Hirschberg and Rosenwink played "Mensch, ärgere dich nicht"[48], a game that was just emerging at the time, with great passion, and Gerum couldn't stop getting angry. Other great minds sat thoughtfully bent over Halma[49] and the ladies' board [Chess].
Papa Kriebel and, alternately, Dr. Weber or Emil Maurice, showed off their generalship skills in the multifaceted tactics of chess in the image of Frederick the Great.
The non-players strolled back and forth between the players, kibitzing and criticizing, and of course always knew everything much better than the actual players themselves.

At around 11 o'clock, the watchman on duty appeared with the mail, the main event of the day. The post was our only connection with the outside world. It was the only way we knew the truth in the country. Newspapers were allowed to be kept, but no National Socialist or nationalist paper or any other press publication that was suspected of being somehow close to the movement. We therefore had to limit ourselves to reading the "Münchener Neueste Nachrichten", which was not unjustly called the "Kuhhaut"[50] at the time, and the deep dark government organ, the "Bayerische Staatszeitung", in order to search for the truth between the lines.

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[41] "Three-player Skat", a traditionally popular German card game.
[42] Another popular German card game, particularly in Bavaria.
[43] Yet another popular German card game, also called "Paderbörnern".
[44] German board game involving jester's caps.
[45] A German gambling card game similar to another card game called "Tippen", also played in Germany and in Austria.
[46] A bit vague, but possibly related to the gambling card game "Lansquenet", which is a "banking game".
[47] Another card game.
[48] German parlor game that literally translates to "Don't Get Angry". The game indeed became popular during the First World War when its creator, Josef Friedrich Schmidt, sent 3,000 copies of it to military hospitals.
[49] Strategy board game invented in the United States.
[50] Related to the colloquial phrase "auf keine Kuhhaut passen", or "doesn't fit on a cowhide", to express disbelief.

All incoming and outgoing mail was, of course, under the strictest control. Between those who wrote to us and those who replied to us, a sentence structure had soon developed that was absolutely meaningless to the uninitiated reader, but from which we could always extract what was worth knowing without the censor noticing.
If one of us did not make a murderous pit of his heart in his written outpourings, he was cited before the censor and, after reading out the countless paragraphs and provisions against which he was supposed to have committed an offense, was threatened with death and serious injury. But that was not all: if a family member, relative or friend bluntly reported what he wanted to say about our situation, about general political events and government rallies in accordance with his convictions, the head of the Postal Inspection Office, who had no access to the sender, took the responsible recipient for granted with astonishing naturalness.
Even Candidate of Law Hermann Fobke was unable to give us any satisfactory information about this legal presumption of the letter snooper.

The pettiness and spiteful narrow-mindedness with which the censorship was handled is exemplified by the letter from our comrade Maurice dated December 28th, 1924, which is reproduced below:

"The Landsberg fortress prisoners, especially the members of Hitler's Stoßtrupp, thank all those who donated to the Christmas collection parcels. As we are addressing the public for the first time today, we do not want to fail to thank our dear benefactors for the many gifts of love we have received in the course of our stay here. These donations are always a sign of the loyalty shown to us ethnic fighters who only wanted the best for their German fatherland on November 8th and 9th, 1923.
May the new year bring all the best for the national movement and thus for our dear Fatherland; that is our only wish."

With loyal German greetings.
On behalf of Emil Maurice, currently a prisoner of Landsberg am Lech
December 28th, 1924

[There are "reservations" about this draft! I was already notified of this on January 3rd, 1925. - E.M.]

After the mail had been distributed, the lucky ones who had received a parcel or money had to report to the guardroom. Here, after a receipt had been issued, the amount of money received was credited to the account of the person entitled to receive it. The financial accounts were settled every Saturday and receipted by the account holder, so that all money transactions were completely cashless.
The parcels or packages had to be opened by the recipients in the presence of the constable on duty. Their contents had to be laid out on the large table in the office. Sausage and cheese, bread and cakes were cut and sliced several times by the guard on duty with a sturdy knife and the cut surfaces were carefully examined to see if there were any secret messages and notices, guns or hand grenades hidden behind their harmless exteriors. Laundry found in the shipment was carefully shaken out and scanned in order to detect any escape tools, bombs or infernal machines hidden in its folds. Toothpaste tubes, sardine tins, shaving and laundry soap, butter, jam and bath sponges, sometimes even cigars and cigarettes, were drilled or pierced several times with needles and other suitable instruments so that such suspicious objects could not be used to smuggle a collapsible airplane or a detachable armored car into the halls of the fortress unnoticed.
Once the laborious and highly embarrassing examination was finally completed, the recipient was allowed to leave unmolested with his shipment having been checked in this way. After this inspection, the parcels and packages, which were usually packed with great care, were naturally a big mess. slices of sausage, cake, cheese and bread were all mixed together in a delightful way. Fat-dripping tins of sardines, sticky jam and honey jars were covered in crumpled laundry and the pierced tubes and soaps formed a

rather appetizing still life with punctured tobacco products, halved apples and pears. The recipient was then asked how to untangle the mess with the help of good friends.

At 12 o'clock, the “Hausel” arrived with lunch from the kitchen in large bowls. In the meantime, the tables in the day room had been covered with old discarded sheets, the plates set out and the mess kit displayed. On Sundays and public holidays, the table was decorated with a few old tins of canned food with bouquets containing more green leaves than colorful flowers to enhance the festive mood. As soon as the plates were full, the person on duty called everyone to the table. The hungry men then stepped behind their regular seats in anticipation of the Führer and his generals. The call of respect rang out and, accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Kriebel and Dr. Weber, the Führer walked through the rows of his followers towards his chair at the head of the table. One of the comrades spoke a short toast. They took their seats and the feast began.
The food, usually stews, equivalent to the products of the field kitchen, which we men of the Stoßtrupp had become sufficiently accustomed to during the long years of war and the Freikorps, rarely gave rise to justified complaints. At first, some owners of particularly sensitive stomachs thought they had to protest against the uninterrupted steamed food. However, their efforts met with no visible success and thus ended by themselves. Only fellow master butcher Karl Hutter, who had to know by profession, claimed to get such a distended nigger belly[51] from the “snake food” that he could easily use it as a noise drum. As a native Bavarian and master butcher, he grumbled with a mighty voice about the unusually large quantities of red cabbage, white cabbage, beans and lentils that were served to him. He was particularly annoyed by the mostly invisible meat, which, in his opinion, could not even be detected with a magnifying glass and only misrepresented itself to him through rare, but still recognizable, eyes of fat.
To be fair, however, it should be noted that, with the exception of the outspoken meat eaters, no one had any reason to complain about the food. It was less nice, however, that the Bavarian State Ministry of Justice charged us “one Reichsmark” per day after we were released from prison.
Little was said during lunch. Only when the Führer had offered “Mahlzeit”[52] and thus concluded the midday meal did conversation begin.
The stewards quickly cleared away the crockery and cutlery and lined the table with tin lids and empty cigarette packets, which served as ashtrays. People sat together comfortably for a while with a lit cigar, cigarette or pipe, talking animatedly.
We tried to make up to the Führer, who never smoked, by offering him fruit or cake from the cupboard. Drinks were Landsberg tap water sweetened with sugar and sometimes mixed with fruit juice if the provisions and financial situation were particularly good.
The conversation lasted about 20 to 30 minutes. Then the Führer lifted from the table and everyone went back to their cells.

[51] Word used is “niggerbauch”; going to guess it's a colloquial term and stereotypical image of Africans with swollen stomachs.
[52] German salutation usually used during meals, though has become more commonplace in non-food related situations today.

What Happened in the Afternoon

“We are convinced... that we will regain a true German Reich of freedom and honor, a true fatherland of the entire German people...”

- **Adolf Hitler, July 28th, 1922**

Between 1 and 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the constable on duty made the rounds of all the cells with a list and took orders for the next day's provisions and supplementary food. All the necessary commodities, from shoe polish to writing paper and all the simpler foodstuffs required, from table butter to salted herring, were procured by the prison administration, and the costs were debited from the account of the person placing the order. In general, this method of procuring additional rations did not cause any difficulties as long as the type, quantity and characteristics of the desired goods were within the provisions of the fortress regulations.
One day, however, Hermann Fobke ordered strawberry ice cream, with whipped cream to be on the safe side with regard to the level of official concessions. With this epicurean request, which was completely out of line with all fortress law, he caused the prison administration to have a serious conflict of conscience. As he had provided a legal justification for his request as a precautionary measure, according to which he might be incapacitated in the event of a negative decision, the request was presented to a higher court for a decision. A resolution was then issued, which the scribes of the relevant ministry had been asked to draft, stating that the request of the prisoner Hermann Fobke was to be taken into account as an exception “in order to preserve his health and ability to be detained”. At the same time, the applicant was to be informed in writing that the permission granted was a one-off exceptional case which could not be generalized or repeated under any circumstances. Fobke, finding neither thanks nor recognition for such a benevolent decision, coldly declared after receiving the ministerial decree that he had now achieved his purpose of having provided the competent penal enforcement authority and its superior government agency with useful work. In the happy awareness of having done his duty, he therefore generously and gladly gave up the strawberry ice cream with whipped cream.

Whenever orders were issued, anyone wishing to discuss a matter or make a complaint would report to the head of the institution. This consisted of the head of the prison, a senior government councillor as director, and his deputy, a government councillor. In addition to “Mr. Chief Administrator”, it also included the medical officer and a representative of the high clergy of both denominations.
At Papa Kriebel's request, we only spoke of the director and his deputy under the code names “Mufti” and “Untermufti”[53]. This name was taken from the well-known Karl May novel “In the Land of the Mahdi”. Such a borrowing of names was obvious because of the particularly emphasized official dignity always displayed by the two representatives of state authority and the similarity of their physical proportions to those of their namesakes in the aforementioned novel.
The result of the respective reports and the course of the conversations with the two Muftis or the content of the instructions given by them had to be reported and described in detail in the circle of comrades afterwards, so that everyone could share in the experiences of the others for their own occasional use.

As soon as the constable had disappeared with the order list, the playing cards were brought out again, or the board games that had been started were continued. Those who wanted to indulge in a midday nap picked up one of the books in the institution's library and stretched out on their beds to read. The entertaining reading generally did its duty surprisingly quickly and soon the snoring of several voices announced that the majority of the fortress prisoners had slumbered off to the land of dreams, where there were no bars or walls.

[53] A mufti is a Islamic jurist and religious scholar.

Between 3 and 4 PM., the cell steward, who in the meantime had inspected the larder and made coffee or tea, tried to call the sleepers to the table.

Finally, at 4.30 PM., the constable unlocked the doors to the courtyard again and the Führer, generals and soldiers hurried out into the open. The monotonous walk up and down between the wall and the border began anew. Those who found this too boring looked for a sunny spot in the courtyard or garden, where they sat down with their legs crossed in the Turkish manner and eagerly indulged in the “dolce far niente” [pleasant idleness] of the peoples of the southern zones.
Often a circle of several comrades was formed and one or the other would either talk about serious and cheerful soldier and war experiences or recount pranks, jokes and deeds from past years of youth and freedom. Adolf Hitler often joined the group of his followers as an attentive listener, interjecting a word here and there and always rousing us to great enthusiasm when he spoke from the rich treasure trove of his own experience. Then we hung on his lips as if spellbound and silent and the hours flew by like minutes without us realizing it. Everything the Führer said and spoke to us became an unforgettable experience, which is why we never tired of listening to him and always urged him to tell us more about his life.
The Führer was often accompanied by Emil Maurice or one of his generals, sometimes also by one or more of his Stoßtruppen, walking up and down the garden path in animated conversation, here and there amidst the whole crowd of his followers marching with him at the same pace. Adolf Hitler particularly enjoyed spending time alone without any company, lost in deep thought, on a narrow strip of gravel that ran along the high perimeter wall at the frequent edge of the garden. We called this secluded path the “Hitler Path”. The Führer loved its seclusion and tranquillity, because the noise of our often wild and loud games rarely reached it. Adolf Hitler may well have tackled many a problem, the solution to which he was only able to put into practice much later, on that lonely walk back and forth and thought through all its possibilities and consequences from the ground up. Almost the entire content of the first part of his work “Mein Kampf” may have been created and formed there.
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At 6 o'clock we had to return to the fortress. The evening meal was eaten in individual cells, unless there was soup or other hot food. It often consisted of potato salad or boiled potatoes with 50 grams of sausage or 100 grams of cheese. Sometimes there was also a salted herring or tomatoes on the side.
The herrings always caused a huge thirst, which we tried to quench by drinking buckets of "water cocoa" of our own invention. As milk was not available and was difficult to obtain in condensed form, this water cocoa was the main drink of the evening. I had brought the recipe for making it with me from the “Tricterfeldern”[54] of the stony deserts of Macedonia.

In terms of alcoholic beverages that could be purchased, we received no more than half a liter of beer per day. This meagre ration used to cause our hard-drinking Munich comrades true Tantalus agony.
Very clever prisoners, who unlike the general public still had a few pieces of silver at their disposal, tried with enviable self-mortification to collect the daily half liter of beer until the weekend so that they could at least have a good pull on Saturday or Sunday. But the summer heat often made the expensive stuff go stale and sour in the absence of any refrigerant. The men Fröschl and Hutter, who were gifted with a keen nose for such things, considered it their sacred duty as comrades to sacrifice themselves after locating the respective beer stash. In this way, they saved the precious liquid from spoiling by drinking it in good time. It was always a delightful sight when the thirsty beer owner looked at the empty bottles in amazement by the beginning of the weekend, and was bitterly disappointed to discover that his hard-earned fortune had fallen victim to fanatical supporters of the slogan "Fight Spoilage".
Those who didn't like beer could indulge in wine. However, this drink was rationed to just a quarter of a liter per man per day and was also so expensive that the dire financial situation usually prohibited such expenditure of its own accord.

[54] Terrain containing many bomb or shell craters, could also be translated as “crater field”.

Schnapps and liqueur were also allowed, but only under clearly defined conditions, from which there was no deviation by a hair's breadth. The fortress rules stipulated that only those prisoners whose state of health required such a highly superfluous stimulant in order to maintain their ability to serve their sentence were allowed to drink a glass of schnapps every day. Nobody was in a position to fulfill this requirement except me, and there was a reason for that: In the years 1916/17 I had contracted the tropical disease malaria in a position at the Cerna swamps near Monastir in Macedonia, for which I had spent weeks in the military hospitals of Nisch and Budapest. This disease had the characteristic, which I had previously found extremely unpleasant, of recurring years later on hot summer days in the form of fever attacks. I was not spared its recurrence in the fortress either. According to official findings already made in Macedonia at that time, quinine alone was not sufficient to combat this ailment properly, but had to be supplemented and increased in its effect by taking the strongest possible doses of alcohol.
Neither the Mufti nor his medicine man could ignore this well-known fact, especially as it had been recorded in writing in my medical papers on file; so, they could not help but grant me, as the only prisoner in the fortress, the benefit of the aforementioned regulatory paragraph. In order to prevent any abuse of this extraordinary concession from the outset, I had to take the authorized glass of schnapps personally from the guard on duty every evening. Gradually I began to appreciate my previously much-maligned malaria and little by little this appreciation even turned into a feeling of gratitude.

I ordered a bottle of cognac from home. After just a few days, the men impatiently awaiting my arrival told me that it had arrived at the guardroom. There the bottle was lovingly labeled with my neatly written name and locked away in the cupboard.
On the evening of arrival, in the absence of a suitable shot glass, I grabbed the nearest mouthwash glass and, accompanied by my legal advisor Hermann Fobke, reported to the duty room for a cognac reception. The constable, who was in charge of filling and accounting for the glasses, was astonished and wanted to express some serious reservations about the “glass”. However, my eloquent comrade immediately put an end to them with a veritable barrage of legal interpretations of the term “glass”. Overwhelmed by the dazzling fireworks of forensic oratory, the officer gave in and, shaking his head, filled the glass to the brim. As quickly as possible, we made our way to the upper rooms with our loot. In the meantime, our entire group had gathered here and were eagerly awaiting our return. I was pounced upon with great shouting. Every man wanted to at least take a close look at the much-loved potion or even to just smell it again. Unfortunately, these laudable intentions were not enough, because in the end the contents of the glass had evaporated so completely and silently from “just looking at it” and “just smelling it” that Fobke and I didn't get any of it at all. It was only with great difficulty that I managed to wet my lips with the much sought-after firewater.
The next evening, Michael Steinbinder dragged out a glass half-pint jug that had been well kept in his cell and recommended that I try to fill it. Without further ado, I agreed and soon stood in the constable's parlor again, hoovering up schnapps. Fobke, who had also come along as a precaution this time, had to bring out the heaviest of his legal arguments about the term “glass”. In lengthy explanations, he succeeded in making it clear to the constable, who, contrary to all expectations had become quite obtuse that day, that even a half-liter container like mine had to be classified as a glass, since it was not size and absorption capacity that were decisive for the definition of this term, but the original material used for its production. The reasoning was convincing. We achieved what we wanted. We left proudly. Although the contents of the bottle were now exhausted, supplies were organized all the more quickly.
Suddenly, all the visitors to our fellow comrades were informed of the presence of a severely malaria-stricken fortress inmate who was always closer to death than to life. And soon, as a sign of compassionate sympathy and loyal devotion, a battery of schnapps bottles filled the equipment cupboard in the constable's room. Steinhäger and Gebirgsenzian, cognac and Schwarzwälder Kirschwasser, sherry brandy and curacao, even double-distilled Nordhäuser Korn were among them. All the many bottles and flasks were in my name. The constables, who had this colorful display of wholesome schnapps and fragrant liqueurs before their eyes every day, had their mouths watering as often as they gazed curiously and enviously at the shipments.

One day, an insatiable comrade even arrived at Cell No. 11 with a glass goldfish bowl that he had shipped from home. That's a jar too, he said meaningfully. But even Fobke was horrified and declared that it was impossible to classify this aquarium as a drinking glass, even if he spoke with the tongues of angels.
So the half-liter remained as it was and every evening everyone was thirsty to "smell" it.
But all thanks were due to the unknown author of that ruling, who was probably not well versed in calculating the contents and had forgotten to specify the exact capacity of the approved glass.

The solution to the drinks issue was a constant source of great concern. Firstly, the Landsberg tap water was outrageously wet[55], as Fiehler said; secondly, it washed lice into our stomachs, as the Feichmayr brothers said; thirdly, it promoted goitre formations due to its low iodine content and high lime content, as master butcher Hutter, a resident of the foothills of the Alps, expertly and firmly claimed.
Barely three days had passed since this claim was made when a veritable goitre epidemic suddenly broke out. The source of the disease was the ground floor, the crowd of the "Rough Landsknechts". Hours later, the epidemic spread to the first floor, where the "white collar proletarians" and other inmates suddenly found not only their collars but also their necks too tight. Finally, the goitre bacilli even attacked the inhabitants of the otherwise quiet General's Wing.
Everyone complained of shortness of breath, sore throats and difficulty swallowing, rubbing their Adam's apples anxiously. All the toilet and shaving mirrors went into action. Every room was filled with gurgling and spitting. No one was spared from the infection - even the Führer seemed to want to become a victim of the epidemic. He, too, complained of difficulty swallowing and looked at his throat in the mirror, equally puzzled and worried. Severe throat problems had returned to the fortress. In desperation, Dr. Weber, master butcher Hutter and retired medical guest Franz Fröschl rushed from room to room with rulers, tape measures and other measuring instruments, measuring, comparing, drawing up tables and making calculations, but were still unable to get to the bottom of the problem. After a restless night, whose dreams were populated by Cyclops-like, primeval figures with eerie goiters and puffy necks, the whole crew except the Führer reported for sick call the next morning. Strangely enough, only Adolf Hitler was spared the progression of this illness.
The constable on duty turned pale with fright. To get some air, he pulled his uniform collar, which suddenly seemed to be too tight, wide open and led us on a run and in double file through the echoing corridors into the arms of the medical officer. The ear trumpet and thermometer fell from his trembling hand and clattered to the floor. Drops of cold sweat beaded on his high forehead, fogged up his large horn-rimmed glasses and finally robbed the good man of his sight. Hey, what a thrill! The telephones rattled helpfully from the doctor's office to the Mufti, to the sub-Mufti, to the head administrator and back again. The switchboard in the telephone exchange rattled like a machine gun in a defensive battle. Medical assistants froze into pillars of salt like Lot's wife. Others confused iodoform with chloroform, castor oil with carbolic acid and boric acid with acetic alumina. In short, chaos seemed to have broken out. Finally, the worthy Mufti entered the precinct personally. Some calm now returned to these agitated minds. With a hand trembling with inner excitement, the medicine man cleaned his large horn-rimmed glasses, roused his assistants from their torpor and confusion with Papa Kriebel's commanding support and set about the investigation, prepared for the worst. With broad wooden spoons he held back our tongues, which stuck out of wide open mouths, and looked down into the darkness of our necks with hollow and round mirrors. This took quite a while. Then he withdrew with our Dr. Weber to the medical consultation. Shaking heads from the Mufti, the sub-Mufti and the head administrator were the result of this medical discussion. Finally, one of the institution's panaceas, the popular tincture of iodine, came into action. Medical assistants neatly brushed the outside of our larynxes with the yellow-brown liquid for so long and so extensively that we could hardly be distinguished from a bunch of Sioux Indians on the warpath. This painting process was to be repeated every morning in accordance with the wishes and will of the medicine man. However, we thankfully refrained from doing so, as the first extensive brushing was enough to wipe out the evil goiters root and branch.

[55] Not sure if this is another colloquial or just exaggerating a petty complaint.

What the Evening Brought Us

“There is so much that can make us happy, and bring us joy - it depends on our hearts and eyes to see where happiness is!”

- **Johannes Trojan**

By half past seven, we had finished our evening meal. The keys jangled and rattled in the locks again. The doors to the courtyard and garden opened for the last time that day.
In the evening we spent most of our time outdoors exercising, for which the large gravel-strewn square in front of the fortress building offered plenty of space and room - healthy physical activity should give us the tiredness we need to sleep soundly through the night. Slingshot and bat-and-ball games were replaced by "Drittenabschlagen"[56], "Capture the Flag" and other running games, in which Adolf Hitler usually acted as referee. It was certainly not an easy task that the Führer had set himself. All too often, in the heat of the moment, we forgot all the rules of proper play, giving the referee frequent opportunities to curb exuberant enthusiasm, record penalty points, reprimand unruly players - in short, there was plenty of work to keep the games on an orderly course.
I never saw Adolf Hitler become impatient or even nervous. With superior calm, he surveyed the course of the competition, made his decisions with a sure eye and his brief shouts of encouragement or rebuke spurred us on to even better performance or promptly called us back to order.
The Führer and we particularly enjoyed a game of ”Abschlaglaufspiel”[57], in which we always put all our energy into catching Papa Kriebel, who was no longer quite up to our youthful light-footedness, as often as possible and bringing him in with loud cries of triumph.

There was only one person who didn't seem to enjoy the wild romp. He sneaked away more and more often. That was Emil Maurice, who suddenly began to take strange paths. And this happened for a very specific reason: Cupid, the cheeky boy, had launched a love arrow from a high battlement at our unsuspecting comrade. Through bars and walls, Maurice was hit right in his weak heart, and his romantic soul caught fire.
At the upper end of the garden, not far from the boundary sign, a narrow path cut through the wide gravel path at right angles as an entrance to a flower bed that had been erected there. Maurice often stood in front of this flowerbed every evening, lost in devout contemplation. We wondered. No one had ever noticed that we had such an ardent flower lover among us. The colorful blooms seemed to captivate our comrade so much that one evening he almost overlooked the timely return to the fortress. It was only the harsh voice of the constable that snatched him away from his lonely, quiet contemplation. It was quite incomprehensible. We were speechless with amazement. Having become almost childishly curious, the next evening we followed the strange behavior of good Maurice from afar. And suddenly the scales fell from our eyes and we were surprised to realize the secret behind his flowerbed romps.
Just beyond the gray transverse wall that closed off the garden to the north were the administrative buildings, with the associated officials' apartments. The rows of windows on the first floor of these buildings towered considerably above the height of the surrounding wall. Behind one of the windows, however, was the bower of a demure maiden, the daughter of a prison officer. The fair maiden had often looked down pityingly on us poor prisoners from the high balcony. One balmy summer evening, Maurice, chasing a colorful butterfly, had accidentally discovered the lovely figure at the window above. From that moment on, it was all over for him and his easily inflamed heart. Since then, tender, invisible bonds of roses have stretched from soul to soul, banishing the minstrel under the window of the lady of his heart every evening.

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[56] “Three-person tee”, a version of tag.
[57] I can not figure out what this game is despite using my dictionaries and about an hour of searching. Going to assume it’s another variant of tag - apologies.

Without any understanding for such budding love at first sight and far from any comprehension of such tender platonic relationships, we secretly lay in wait in the surrounding bushes on one of the following evenings, watching the further development of this game of love with excitement.
The tightly closed window was still covered by thick lace curtains. As if by chance, Maurice sauntered over with a slightly prancing step and stopped at his usual spot as if captivated by the sight of a dark red rose. Suddenly he began to whistle to himself. Softly at first, then increasing in volume, the melting notes of the whistle pierced the silence all around. Finally, they turned into a specific signal that was repeated over and over again. First pleading, then begging, then demanding, the tender melody swung over the battlements and, echoing softly from afar, caught on the smooth wall of the house in front of the closed window, where it died away, seeking entrance.
Then, as if by magic, the veiling curtains slid back. Both casements opened wide, and like Juliet, the fair lady let herself in with all her enchanting Romeo. Entranced and glowing with the blazing fire of love, Maurice threw up his arms and began to wave with both hands with all his might. Immediately, however, the answer came from over there. The beautiful, slender, white girl's hands rose and waved again and again. Hour after hour, evening after evening, the waving continued.
On the basis of repeated observations, we determined that the two longing for each other had, over time, developed a real secret sign language through their waving and were able to communicate perfectly in this way. Day after day, week after week, month after month, the evening love idyll lasted. But we were crude and intriguing enough to all step under the window and try waving. Unfortunately, it had no effect this time. The beauty didn't show herself at all that evening. Maurice, who was usually so calm, was boiling with rage and punished us with complete disregard for the next few days. In view of this blatant failure, we tried not to disturb the lovers any more. Only Wilhelm Briemann, who had a similar romantic and profound disposition to Maurice, continued to compete with the handsome comrade; whether it was because he had too little command of sign language or because his courtship was not well received, Maurice outshone him by far and remained the sole winner. Dismayed by the rejection he had received, Briemann withdrew to his lonely cell and mourned his hopeless love.
The rest of us, however, could not help but feel so sorry for the good Briemann, to the point that even the Führer could not ignore the "sweet secret" of the beautiful Emil and the defeat of his opponent. To console Briemann, the Führer drew him as a hopeless bridegroom and presented him with the sketch as a plaster on the burning wound of his heart.
But Adolf Hitler often watched the victorious Emil and his beloved with a furtive grin and rejoiced at the tender bonds that were forming, casting a glimmer of light romance into the dull gray of life in the fortress.
How did this love end? Like the fairy tale of the two royal children: they couldn't come together because the wall was far too high![58]

At 8 o'clock, it was back to the fortress cells and day room. We sat together for a while chatting over a quick cup of tea or water cocoa. The game rats delved back into their cards, while the bookworms continued to devour their reading material.
This was also the time when the guests from our ranks who were invited gathered in the cozy corner of the General’s Wing for stimulating conversation.

At nine o'clock sharp, the duty sergeant appeared with his keys jingling and rattling, and announced that it was time to lock up. The lights went out in the large recreation room. Everyone had to stay in their cells. There they could continue playing, reading or otherwise entertaining themselves. At ten o'clock, the room lights went out too, and soon the men were lying in their beds.
It was rarely possible for us to fall asleep immediately. Hirschberg and Fobke, in particular, had the habit of standing in their beds and turning around several times until they had finally found their place. It

[58] Based on the German folk ballad “Es waren zwei Königskinder”, about two royal children who die when attempting to see each other across distant shores.

almost regularly happened that in the dark, Hirschberg brushed against the flypaper above his bed, and the sticky paper often wrapped itself around his body parts in the strangest of shapes. He then had to be freed and cleaned of the paper scraps, glue and dead flies by his roommates, who had been asked for help, and this was only possible with great difficulty.
Many a problem were attempted to be solved in these hours before falling asleep. Many an adventure were told and repeated. Future plans were considered and rejected, personal needs and concerns of the individual were discussed in the circle of comrades and ways of joint relief were deliberated. Sometimes we also took turns telling dozens of jokes that could not deny their origins as lansquenet or trench humor. Often we also tried to gently fall asleep. Happy sleep-blessed natures often slid into Morpheus' arms in the middle of a word or song. Others often tossed and turned for hours, restless and plagued by worries, struggling with themselves and fate, until they too were overcome by sleep. Finally, however, regular polyphonic snoring announced that the often loud and noisy men of the fortress garrison had been transformed into peaceful sleepers.
Only a single light was usually still burning late into the night, and that was the lamp in the Führer's room. He had been allowed, in return for the payment of the corresponding costs, to keep the light burning after hours. During these lonely periods of night, Adolf Hitler sat bent over books and papers, working on Germany's resurrection. As he himself later stated, it was here that he found the necessary time to think through and formulate the problems and guiding principles set out in his book Mein Kampf. Thus, even then, in the confines of his room, he kept watch over Germany and the German people and created the foundations that later made possible the brilliant victory of the movement and the breaking of the chains of Versailles.

Hour after hour, the tinny chimes of the prison clock echoed through the night. Somewhere in the distance, dogs barked. The steps of the night guards clattered monotonously in the courtyard outside, on their rounds around the buildings. Here and there, a call for time and password was passed from relief to relief and from round to round, given by the sentries and guards. Every hour, the steps of the night patrols and the ticking of the clocks could be heard cracking through the dark, silent corridors. But when the sky was cloudless, the moon cast its silver rays through the wide shadow-casting bars into the rooms and vaults, keeping a silent watch from heaven over prisoner and guard alike.

Leaders, Generals and Soldiers

“Strength lies not in the majority, but in the purity of the will to make sacrifices.”
- **Adolf Hitler, September 5th, 1923**

The days came, the days went. Nothing distinguished them from those who had gone before and those who would come after. The sameness of the daily routine, regulated down to the last detail by the fortress rules, weighed heavily on us. Life was bleak, gray and monotonous. Time dragged on unspeakably slowly. We tried by all means to make our bleak, mind-numbing existence more lively, varied and entertaining. We were still fresh and unbroken, and yet from week to week we felt more and more the first effects of the deprivation of liberty on our minds and souls. Naturally, we summoned up all our strength to resist. We did everything to keep ourselves physically healthy and thus also mentally fresh. We were grateful for every event, no matter how trivial and insignificant, that was suitable to interrupt the monotony of the course of the day.

Above all, this included constant contact with the outside world. However, this could not be maintained by the written word alone - we also wanted to be in personal contact with our relatives, friends and acquaintances as often as possible. We also wanted to speak face to face with those to whom we wrote from our seclusion, in order to feel a breath of free life again.
That is why we joyfully welcomed every visitor, and every day of a visitor's stay was a special occasion for each of us.
The course of the visits and the associated formalities were precisely predetermined in corresponding paragraphs of rules, down to the minute, and pressed into the most bureaucratic, dead forms possible. For the next of kin, i.e. parents, wives and brothers and sisters, there were 30 to 40 minutes; in very rare, specially justified exceptional cases, even a whole hour of speaking time. Friends were allowed to speak for 10 to a maximum of 15 minutes. Other acquaintances were allowed only 3 to 5 minutes. Permission to speak was also refused on occasion; this was applied to visitors who were suspected of inciting the prisoners against the state authority or its endeavors during their visit, or to prisoners who were believed to be exerting an undesirable influence on the visitor.
The visitor had to apply to the fortress administration for permission to visit, provided that he had announced his visit to the prisoner in writing in advance. If the visitor came without prior notice, he had to personally request permission to speak from the Mufti or deputy Mufti. The prisoner was allowed 3 to 4 hours of visiting time per week. Of course, all visitors were thoroughly checked and examined to see if they were carrying any hidden weapons, tanks or airplanes. They were also eagerly searched for any kind of written or printed material that could have been sent to us without going through the censorship. Once the visitor had been thoroughly checked and had provided exhaustive information about his great-grandmother, grandmother, mother and child, and had been able to provide proof of the existence of squeaky clean citizenship, the Mufti or his deputy graciously granted him access to these “traitors”. But before that, there was a long-winded reading of the rules of conduct, along with penal provisions. Then, finally, a police officer escorted the visitor through the garden and courtyard into the fortress. They would stop at the guard room, where all possible souvenirs had to be handed in and the visitor's name and intended length of the visit had to be entered. Finally, the visitor was led to one of the consulting rooms on the first floor. There may have been few who, after completing all these formalities and after the impressions they received from the walls and bars and especially from the large rattling key chains, did not feel like being trapped themselves.

Thick curtains, which had the purpose of hiding the bars that were also attached to the windows here, a colorful tablecloth and a wall clock, whose hand, jumping restlessly from minute to minute, visibly emphasized the time limit of the visit, distinguished the meeting rooms from the cells.
Once the visitor had taken a seat, the inmate being visited was notified. Under the watchful eye of the guard, they shook hands in greeting. The seats were arranged in such a way that the table between the

visitor and the prisoner always prevented any kind of intimate approach from the outset. The guard sat down in a corner of the small room within earshot, from where he could keep a constant eye and ear on the visit. He often pretended to look out the window or read a newspaper to soften the impression of constant surveillance that paralyzed any conversation; but all the more closely he followed what was said in accordance with his instructions, so that not a single word subversive to the state escaped him.
The constant presence of a representative of the penal authority, despite attempts at normality, naturally had an extremely disruptive and inhibiting effect on any topic. It was quite impossible to say anything confidential and off-the-books. A single ill-considered word, a single expression open to misunderstanding, would have had immediate and serious consequences, causing both visitor and prisoner considerable inconvenience. While a man could not always hide his intimidation in the face of all the external circumstances, women almost always looked truly frightened. The impressions that the harmless visitor received about the whole unfamiliar treatment were deep and lasting. They gave him a rough idea of how dangerous we were considered to be by the state authorities at the time.

All of our complaints and representations to the administration of the institution and other relevant authorities regarding this undignified way of handling visits went unheard. They were dismissed with the cheap and hypocritical remark that, for reasons of justice, we must not be treated better than the communists from the time of the Munich Soviet government who are currently being held in Kaisheim Fortress. A more fitting proof of the mendacity, deviousness and hypocrisy of bourgeois-Marxist politics could hardly be provided - they were not ashamed to deliberately and intentionally place the Führer and us, his followers, on the same level as a Ernst Toller, an Hans Unterleitner and similar individuals of Jewish-Bolshevik origin[59]. Nothing could have increased our grim rage against the holders of state power and our fanatical belief in the complete victory of our idea more than this kind of treatment and equalization with the communist underclass.
So far, then, had the system of justice in its administration of formal justice, dripping with justice, distanced itself from the true and healthy popular sentiment; not a single distinction was or was intended to be made between us young front-line soldiers of Langemarck and the deserters and bandits of the soviet and hostage murderers of 1918/19. On the contrary, by attributing to us the same criminal and treasonous motives and aims as to them, they secretly realized their intention of defaming Adolf Hitler and his followers in the eyes of the entire world. They consciously branded him and us as dangerous anarchists who defy the state.
Those who know the Führer will be able to appreciate to some extent how he in particular suffered from these depressing and devious methods of distortion and treatment. His manly, incorruptible sense of justice and his particularly pronounced sense of right and wrong made it infinitely difficult for him to have to watch powerlessly as justice was turned into injustice through treachery, and injustice was elevated to the level of statehood under the guise of an allegedly compensatory justice.
This ignominious judgment of our intentions and actions will remain forever a stain on the history of the November Republic, which was so ingloriously submerged. The knowledge of this will be handed down from us to our children and grandchildren, so that future generations may never forget how difficult it was for the Führer of Greater Germany to march his hard, steep way to the top.

When a visitor entered the fortress, the news of his arrival spread like wildfire through all the cells, which also alerted the garrison. The stairs and corridors that the visitor had to pass on his way to the office were suddenly populated with curious inmates. They all wanted to look the foreign guest from the land of freedom in the eye, and wanted to receive a greeting from the wide world in order to be able to persevere in their dreary existence.

[59] Toller was the short-lived president of the Bavarian Socialist Republic; Unterleitner was a SPD and USPD (Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany) politician who briefly held the position of State Minister for Social Welfare under Kurt Eisner in the Free State of Bavaria.

The duty of inviolable comradeship was imposed on the lucky prisoner: as soon as he had parted from his friend, he was obliged to report to all his comrades in every detail on the course of the discussion, the content of the conversations and the news received, so that even those who had not been visited would be given a modest share in the joy that the visitor himself had experienced.

We spent a long time thinking about how to make the minutes that the visitors spent as guests behind bars and walls warmer, friendlier and more homely. It was Comrade Gerum who came up with the idea of serving the visitors coffee or tea with cake or bread and butter and jam from our pantry in the meeting room; they should not miss out on German hospitality, despite our hardship and our imprisonment.
The request, presented by the eloquent Papa Kriebels to the initially highly skeptical-looking Mufti, was finally approved.
Volunteers to serve the food came forward in droves, especially when female visitors were announced. The rush for the serving tray often took on such proportions in such cases that it was necessary to decide by lot or to switch to individual services. First, the most curious of the prisoners brought the plates; the second would bring the cups; a third appeared with the spoons; a fourth carried the sugar bowl; a fifth served the coffee; a sixth served the bread; a seventh came with the spread. One after the other, laboriously setting out their offerings in front of the visitor and visited, they would disappear again, already handing the door handle to the next server.
And so it happened that the individual comrades gradually became personally acquainted with the wives and next of kin of their fellow prisoners. And because the same, shared adversity forges and connects people more than anything else, friendships developed from this getting to know each other under such strange circumstances, from family to family, which still exist today and have created a great comradely community out of the former fortress prisoners and their relatives for life.

The leaders, first and foremost the Führer himself, received many more visitors than we did. Members of the Reichstag and the Landtag, Gau and district leaders, and SA leaders from all German districts come to Adolf Hitler's office - here they reported on the welfare of the movement in far-off and nearby places, obtained instructions and advice on difficult matters, and took with them guidelines for their further work within the country. Not only did the well-known men and sub-leaders of the party arrive, but also many friends and personal acquaintances. In addition, many ordinary, unknown parties and popular circles and social classes wanted to see Adolf Hitler, to speak to him personally.
These visits were not always of a gratifying nature. All kinds of unnecessary trivialities, various human and all-too-human matters were brought to the attention of the Führer. People also sought his advice and help in purely private matters. He was supposed to decide on all kinds of completely subordinate factual and ideological differences of opinion. He was supposed to judge trivial, petty party squabbles and personal differences. Curious press reporters wanted to interview him, and profit-hungry publishers wanted to buy his book. However, such visits were never successful.
Even unscrupulous profiteers, lecherous sensation-seekers and the ever-present gossips tried in vain to gain access to Adolf Hitler under pretexts that were usually recognized in time.
Thus, for the Führer, rarely a day went by without a visit. Sometimes the two meeting rooms of the fortress were not sufficient for the flood of visitors, meaning other suitable spaces had to be acquired by prison authorities.

For us, the day on which Adolf Hitler received General Ludendorff was always a special occasion. Thanks to the unlimited authority that the victor of Tannenberg enjoyed with the management of the institution, combined with the warm recommendation of Papa Kriebels to the Mufti, we Stoßtruppen were also able to greet the great general of the World War and report to him.
In military-style brevity, the Chief of Staff of the old, glorious field army spoke to us, his former soldiers, praised our behavior and strengthened our courage.
Almost six hours per week, sometimes more, visitors would come to see Adolf Hitler. Later, however, when the absence of the outstanding personality of the Führer in the movement had a noticeable effect,

and some of them began to go their own way because they believed they could circumvent and disregard the Führer's instructions, he withdrew more and more into himself and refused to continue receiving such a large number of visitors. From then on, only a few, but all the more tried and true and loyal fellow campaigners, came to confer with Adolf Hitler. Among those who still came to see Adolf Hitler were the co-defendants in the great trial, Reich Minister Wilhelm Frick and Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Brückner, former commander of the Munich SA Regiment; the Reichsleiter Alfred Rosenberg and Max Amann, the Führer's personal attendant at the time; Councillor Ulrich Graf; and his old comrade-in-arms SS-Brigadeführer Christian Weber.

We were able to spend half of the day outdoors, usually in the open. But the sun did not always shine, and the sky was not always blue. There were also cloudy, rainy days with low-hanging clouds; in those days the drizzle trickled down relentlessly from gray, low-hanging clouds, spoiling our stay in the windy courtyard and garden, where the dripping trees and shrubs were reflected melancholy in large puddles of water and mud.
But we were not particularly depressed by the weather, as it only gave us expectant joy, because on such days the Führer always spoke to us in the large day room. We would sit close together around him and listen eagerly to his profound explanations on a variety of topics. The past, present and future passed before our minds in vivid detail. We no longer heard the rain beating against the window panes, no longer heard the west wind rattling the bars and howling around towers and walls, but listened only to the deep, sonorous voice of him who spoke to us and shared with us his innermost will and his deepest thoughts. The program of the movement, with its few but world-shaking points, was hammered into us here in all its details, clearly and understandably forever. Race and nation, blood and soil, previously dead concepts, were shaped into living reality. Two conceptions, which at first sight are poles apart, Nationalism and Socialism, were welded together before our eyes into one common goal, into one common striving, one unified whole, the two parts of which were so inextricably interwoven that each part was dependent on the other, and could not be separated without each remaining an empty, meaningless phrase or a slogan that could never be realized. With prophetic certainty, Adolf Hitler foresaw the coming intellectual and economic developments of his time. He announced the complete collapse of the policy of reparations and fulfillment, the end of Marxism, the end of the rule of the Center Party and of Communism, and the end of the so-called world of bourgeois parties. The unshakable will to fight and the unshakeable faith in the final victory were then implanted in our hearts by the Führer, and he led us into his plans for the future, the ultimate goal of which was already Greater Germany.

As a rule, the Führer's remarks and lectures were followed by detailed discussions and lively debates. Everyone could express their doubts and concerns about what they had heard, openly and without reservation; everyone was supposed to voice their personal opinion on the issues at hand and everyone was encouraged to make suggestions. Adolf Hitler was tireless in answering every question, no matter how trivial. He gave a full and thorough answer to every single opinion. He never lost his temper, even when an incorrigible comrade was hard to dissuade from his preconceived personal opinion. It was plain that the Führer enjoyed it when the discussion took on a very lively, sometimes even stormy form.
For hours, for example, we debated the idea of the all-embracing German national community, which our teacher had already presented to us. Under the circumstances at that time, this idea seemed so unspeakably great and remote to us that our body, which was bound to the present and stuck to small everyday things, simply could not grasp it. In our narrow-minded, landsknecht-like inner attitudes, we were far from being mature and open-minded enough to think of such a desirable ideal or even to grasp it in its full scope. No, all this seemed to us to be only beautiful considerations that could not be realized on earth. We, with our little band, were all too rooted in the facts of the situation. We wanted to counter the loudly and clearly propagated "dictatorship of the international proletariat" of the other side with our own "dictatorship of the national front-line soldier". We wanted to settle the score with our opponents and enemies of the fatherland eye for eye and tooth for tooth, and not reach out to them as our lecturer asked us to.

Slowly but surely, the Führer overcame that initial resistance, that attitude born of small and narrow circumstances, which first wanted to tear down everything that existed and then rebuild it anew, thus throwing out the baby with the bathwater. He broadened the limited intellectual horizon of our striving, which until then had been set only on tangible short-term goals. He led us out of the misery and dejection of the present and allowed us to glimpse into the distant future, into the Germany that he envisioned, whose inhabitants - including those who had been misled and seduced - were to be welded and forged together without exception, with us and all those who were of good will, into an unbreakable, true national community.

Adolf Hitler's expositions were not concerned only with the present and the future; he also presented the lessons of the past in masterly speeches. Descriptions from the Führer's own life were interwoven. The hard years of his youth after the early death of his caring parents, the years of development in a foreign country were brought to us. We learned that Adolf Hitler's father had originally intended his son to become a civil servant. We witnessed how this son finally followed his calling to work as a freelancer. The Führer mercilessly exposed the political and social conditions, with all their sources of error and sins of omission, and drew the logical conclusions for the future. Particularly impressive was the description of his first visit to the Austrian Federal Parliament and the historical consideration of the person of the great Mayor of Vienna, Carl Lueger. Adolf Hitler had words of the highest praise for the old German army, which he called the indispensable school of upright German manhood and the soldierly way of life. He gratefully recalled the high sense of duty of the unknown German soldier and the tremendous achievement of the glorious fielded army, which had repeatedly stood up to the superior forces of the enemy for four endless years.
Our hearts beat faster when we heard him express it, from his very being; for none was more called to it than he, the unknown corporal of the great war, who exemplified to us anew each day this fulfillment of duty, loyalty to comrades, and personal modesty, and who wanted to resurrect Germany's spiritual weapons and armor.

I was able to fight in the Great War as a front-line soldier on the front line, but I also had to witness the terrible failure of those November days of 1918. Many uplifting and many horrific things have happened before my eyes in the turmoil of those battles and in the hustle and bustle of the post-war years. All the more could I therefore understand what must have been going on in the Führer's soul when, in the days of the collapse of the once-proud Bismarckian Empire, he lay helpless and blind in the military hospital at Pasewalk, while around him a world went to ruins.
That Adolf Hitler, during that time in the fortress of Landsberg, when everything around him seemed to be collapsing again, when he himself was deprived of all external power, defenseless and imprisoned, never lost his convincing faith in Germany and his people's future is best demonstrated by the tremendous energy within him and the true greatness of his character. When his triumphant opponents had already written him off, he raised the Reich flag again. In those days he created a nucleus for the continuation of the only interrupted, but never abandoned, fight for Germany's awakening. He managed to fill the often fainthearted, sometimes even despairing fellow prisoners with new faith and new courage. Once he did this, it was only a matter of time until he took up the fight to win over the souls of the entire German nation.
Occasionally, the sergeants on duty would listen very intently to these lessons, hidden somewhere within earshot, and thus, against the will of their superiors and masters, became familiar with our world view and our ideas.

It happened in mid-June. The day of the Führer's Name Day[60] had come. We wanted to make it a special celebration, and from there we had thought up a new event for the monotonous prison life. On the evening of June 16th, 1924, the "Rough Landsknechtes" held a genuine Bavarian "Haberfeldtreiben"[61].
Dressed in their linen bed sheets, their faces blackened with soot, armed with logs, pokers and other noisy instruments, they quietly gathered outside Adolf Hitler's cell. A heavy banging on his door, as well as loud muttering from the Haberer[62], made the Führer step outside, and his face reflected surprise and astonishment at the strange procession gathered in the anteroom of the General's Wing. Accompanied by approving murmuring, the Haberfeldmeister[63] immediately asked the introductory question:
"Adolf Hitler, are you here?"
The Führer, who immediately went along with the joke, replied with a strong "Here!", whereupon the Haberfeldmeister took the floor again.
"We men are gathered here to hold fair judgment according to ancient law and custom over this seducer of the people who calls himself Adolf Hitler."
After this announcement, the names of the "Haberer" were read out, among whom were some very strange personalities: poacher-king Hinterecker[64], robber murderer Kneißl[65], Minister of Culture Matt the Black[66], the Dioscuri brothers Erzberger and Rathenau[67], master saddler Fritz Ebert[68], Gustav Scheidemann of the withered hand[69], Jew Isaak Kohn[70] with the Ark of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments Hoffmann the Runaway[71], Schneppenhorst the Minister of War[72] and Toller, his Chief of Staff from the days of the Munich Soviet, as well as a number of Dachau farmers.
The Haberfeldmeister continued:
"Haberers, are you all here?"
Waving their "weapons" and making noise with their instruments, the Haberers answered in chorus:
"Yes, we are here!"
The Haberfeldmeister continued:
"Before us stands a corrupt traitor and state criminal who has undertaken to deal a severe blow to our white and blue Bavarian interests, and embarrassed our esteemed gentlemen Kahr, Lossow and Seisser in a public court hearing in front of all the people. Although Kahr always declared that he knew nothing and

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[60] "Name Day" is a Orthodox and Catholic traditional celebration that honors both a saint and the person named after them.
[61] The "Haberfeldtreiben", or "Haber Field Drive" was a form of citizen justice in the Bavarian Oberland during the 18th and 19th centuries. Taking place away from the village, the prosecutors, usually making efforts to be anonymous, persecuted those who broke social or moral laws and read out their accusations in verse; those found guilty would be publicly shamed, their name and memory branded in infamy, and were ran out of town.
[62] The persecutors of the Haberfeldtreiben.
[63] The leader of the Haberfeldtreiben.
[64] I could find no information about any Hinterecker, neither as a poacher or a Bavarian.
[65] Based on the Bavarian outlaw, poacher and antihero Mathias Kneißl.
[66] Based on Bavarian Minister of Culture Franz Matt, who played a role in putting down the Beer Hall Putsch by appealing to the public against the "Prussian Ludendorff".
[67] Based on the infamous figures Matthias Erzeberger and Walther Rathenau; "Dioscuri" is referencing the Greek brothers and deities Castor and Pollux.
[68] First president of Germany following the proclamation of the Weimar Republic.
[69] Philipp Scheidermann was a SPD politician and proclaimer of the Weimar Republic. The "withered hand" is in reference to Scheidermann's response to the Versailles Treaty, just before his government resigned: "Which hand would not have to wither, that would put itself and us in these iron-chains".
[70] Not a specific person, but an icon of the Jew. In a speech delivered on July 28th, 1922, Hitler makes the comment: "While Moses Kohn sits in the directors' meeting, advocating a policy of firmness... his brother, Isaac Kohn, stands in the factory yard, stirring up the masses: take a good look at them; all they want is to oppress you."
[71] In reference to Adolph Hoffmann, a German Socialist politician who advocated heavily for the separation between church and state and the practice of Christianity by the wealthy, giving him the nickname "Ten Commandments Hoffmann" in the papers.
[72] Ernst Schneppenhorst was briefly the Minister for War in the short-lived Bavarian Socialist Republic.

had a professional secret, Adolf Hitler and his cronies repeatedly asserted that the three noble gentlemen were proven scoundrels. He also tried, “au weih geschrien”[73], to drive our beloved brothers and fellow citizens from the tribe of Israel out of our country, although then there is no one to plunder the people. He also did everything to brand harmless people as profiteers and usurers and, in particular, to make life difficult for our peasant leader Wutzlhofer[74], known as “Wuzi”, publicly calling him a swindler, thereby deliberately exposing our highly honorable Bavarian People's Party. The brave party leader Held[75] from Hesse was also not safe from Hitler's attacks, although this great hero, as a non-Bavarian, has the biggest “mouth” in the Bavarian parliament. He even dared to attack our stubborn, highly educated Dr. Heim, the crown of Tuntenhausen[76], who has done so much good for us poor farmers, and that is the last straw. So we, the brave farmers' unionists, the people's party members and the federal subjects of “Bavaria and the Reich”, are forced to hold court over this “cheap Austrian” Adolf Hitler before he proceeds to destroy our Bavarian sausage monopoly and the much-loved Mainlinie[77]. That is why I asked you, Haberers, if you would like to pass judgment on this insolent destroyer of our very own Bavarian rights?”
The answer was unanimous: “Yes, we want to judge him, according to ancient custom!”
Then the Haberfeldmeister passed the sentence:
“As master of the Haberers, I sentence the Name Day candidate Adolf Hitler to immediate expulsion from Landsberg am Lech. He is not worthy to breathe the good Bavarian country air here any longer. He must leave these rich meat pots and the careful protection of our brave Mufti. He is further sentenced to return immediately to Munich, to alert the SA, to once again pollute all of Germany with his noisy automobile, and to beat up Jews and Reds because we can no longer control them, until they are taken by the devil. Haberers, are you satisfied?”
The hangers-on were well satisfied and, as a sign of their agreement, they brandished their 'weapons' noisily and shouted incessantly:
“Yes, sir! It must be just so, and no other way!”
Satisfied with the wise and just decision of their leader, they went their way, leaving the Führer smiling contentedly and shaking his head.

On the morning of June 17th, 1924, the members of our house band crept as quietly as possible into the General's Wing and set up their instruments.
For days before, Froschl had been busy constructing a drum set and a kind of bass violin out of all kinds of wooden parts, wires, empty tin cans and other accessories. Thanks to the knowledge he had acquired in the trenches in the art of making makeshift instruments, he had been quite successful.
At 8:30 sharp, under the artistic direction of Otto Reichart, the music began for the morning serenade. The joyful melodies sounded merrily through the open windows on this bright summer's day. The stationary music was followed by our personal visits to the Führer, to whom we individually conveyed our best wishes on this Feast of the Holy Name.

The actual official celebration took place in the evening of the same day; the day room had been decorated for the occasion with green branches that had been cleverly and secretly snatched from the garden. A few flowers, their bright colors contrasting nicely with the white tablecloths, had been snatched from the garden by a storm a few days earlier. As soon as Adolf Hitler and his generals had taken their seats, the house orchestra, augmented by the bass violinist, retired medical guest Franz Fröschl, struck up some lively music. Then the “Überbrettl”[78] within Hitler’s cell, modeled after the well-known Munich

[73] German phrase meaning essentially “woe is me”.
[74] Johann Wutzlhofer was the Bavarian Minister of Agriculture and was one of the men kidnapped during the Beer Hall Putsch. Not much info exists about him.
[75] Referring to Heinrich Held, Minister President of Bavaria.
[76] Referring to Georg Heim, a Bavarian politician who advocated for Bavarian separatism, co-founded the Bavarian People’s Party, and led a Catholic farmer’s movement.
[77] The Mainlinie is the historical and political boundary separating Northern and Southern Germany.
[78] The Überbrettl was a “literary cabaret” venue in Berlin that specialized in satire and humor.

artists' tavern “Simplizissimus”, made its debut. Paul Hirschberg, who had previously been shaved with the sharpest razors that had ever been used, so smoothly that he heard the angels whistling in heaven while his skin was still burning, donned flowing robes artfully put together from colorful pajamas, and, well powdered and made up, opened the artists' round dance as a sophisticated soubrette. She delighted the enthusiastic audience with the melody “Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald” (Stories from the Vienna Woods) with her magnificent coloratura soprano. She was followed by our stand-up violinist, Hans Haug, who played a moving violin solo, and the divinely gifted mime Berthold Fischer, who gave a very successful parody of Franz Mohr from Schiller's “Robbers”. He was followed by “Aladdin with the Magic Lamp”, performed by Franz Fröschl, whose performances were memorably accompanied by the house band with a sea shanty. “Aladdin” first presented himself as a contortionist and amazing escape artist. Then he switched to the modern strongman, who, without any visible effort, drove nails several inches long through the tabletops with his bare fist. Finally, “Aladdin” read cards in the gypsy style and told the strangest tales of the future from the morning coffee grounds.
Hermann Fobke, as the appointed house poet, now appeared and read from his own works, starting with:

“The Dawes Report”

In the opinion of the people
who today,
rule Germany,
and thus lead the people,
our act was:
treason!
Just think:
we wanted
The scoundrels and profiteers
of the greatest caliber,
who once betrayed the front
and crushed Germany,
should be:
hanged!
We wanted,
As it should be
freedom and honor
and clanking weapons
That the Reich should adorn again.
We wanted to
No longer bend our backs,
Show our fists,
Chase away the foreigners: Kill them!

But this wanting
Was, according to the protocols
And paragraphs,
Hard to penalize.
It was in fact: High treason!

Now the government,
Full of inner emotion,
With great gestures,
Has sold off the best

of greater value,
what little remained to us,
the stranger, the dear,
on the advice of the experts:
the grain of our fields,
the wood of our forests,
the ore in the mines,
the strength of our boys.

Only one thing remained for our own country:
our shame!

But according to the law,
our deed was:
high treason!

After that, the Otto Reichart band played the Hoch- und Deutschmeistermarsch, the march of the Royal Hoch- und Deutschmeister Regiment. This was followed by the presentation of the house poet with his latest work:

"Treason"

They say we have betrayed that,
What is officially called the German Reich,
That is what the People's Court deliberated,
And then we were sentenced for our actions
"To be confined for an indefinite period".

Yes, we wanted to smash it,
The black-red-gold republic,
And wanted to get those who
Now hold the high offices,
Devouring each other in German misery.

We wanted to tear this empire of shame
Into a hundred thousand shreds.
We wanted to build a gallows for the gang of profiteers
Who now rule in the German land,
A gallows, as is fitting.

Then should arise anew
The German Reich from shame and want,
The Reich of freedom, honor, loyalty,
And fluttering in the blue of heaven
Should be a swastika in black, white, red.

Guard yourself, you Reich of thieves,
You too will one day be ripe for the sowing!
Guard yourselves, you cowardly national criminals,
We are the avengers of the German people
And we continue to commit "high treason"!

The finale of the performances was the first appearance of the "Upper Bavarian Isar Cossack Choir", which is under my leadership and direction. The blouses of the Cossacks were represented by nightdresses pulled over the trousers, which were pulled together at the waist by colorful strings. The music intoned the Volga song and after this solemn, melancholy melody, the polyphonic choir sang the following text:

"Song of the Isar Cossacks"

Brothers, have you heard the news,
What happened in Bavaria,
Where the people are scared,
Because Adolf Hitler marched.

Even ministerial chairs are shaking,
Because in the process, it is true,
Hitler did not hesitate for long,
Which was embarrassing for Kahr.

That is why the bunch of fat cats
Thought back and forth fearfully:
This Hitler, it's horrifying,
He's giving us a hard time.

And from black, red and golden souls,
The decision came to light:
Justice shall now command
That Hitler must go to prison.

The Mischpoke[79] were already rejoicing,
Our unity is glorious,
And the black and the red
Iron Front[80] is standing by.

"The Nazis are now dead," they say,
"The danger is now averted,
With Hitler no longer in the lead,
They are good for nothing.

These guys are dismissed,
This serious danger to the state,
Herr von Kahr is a pearl,
Let's build an altar for him in thanks.

Now we can govern in peace,
The opposition is silent,
We no longer need to be embarrassed,

[79] Yiddish word for "family" or "clan".
[80] The "Iron Front" was a Weimar paramilitary organization opposed to National Socialism, monarchism and communism, and was associated with the SPD.

Ah, the people are so stupid!"

Oh, you blacks and you reds,
All in vain is your struggle,
With harassment and bans
You'll never kill the spirit.

One day we'll march through the land again,
Shouting: "German people, awake!
And tear apart your chains,
Then it will be our Day of Freedom!"

Our march is unstoppable,
No bureaucrat,
No clever measure,
Will stop our march!

So close the ranks more tightly,
No one will ever get us down,
Over red and black rabble
The swastika will one day triumph!

The harmonious, atmospheric course of this evening and the performances shown, pleasing to the eye and ear, were met with undivided applause from the Führer, his generals and his comrades. Therefore, the unanimous decision was taken to organize a similar comradeship evening every Saturday.

As a special contribution to these events, the imaginative Cell No. 11 soon self-published a fortress newspaper, "Der Landsberger Ehrenbürger" (The Landsberg Freeman), which from then on appeared every weekend.
Under the pseudonym "Fix," Hermann Fobke was responsible for the first, partly serious, partly ironic-humorous section, while I had reserved the right to edit the second, more satirical-humorous part under the pseudonym "Fax." Comrade Gerum served as the publishing director. Paul Hirschberg was responsible for the feuilleton, theater, and art criticism. Other contributions were provided by all the inmates of the fortress who were enlisted as staff. Adolf Hitler worked primarily as an illustrator and caricaturist. The advertising department was under the direction of Edmund Schneider. The editorial deadline was Wednesday noon each week. In the days that followed, the newspaper was typed and then secretly duplicated during the evenings on the Führer's hectograph machine.
The first part of the paper usually opened with a current editorial by the Führer or a general. This was followed by a reporter-style overview of all the more important events that had taken place in the past week. This was mainly based on the morning reports of the dog-breeder Frosch. Then followed contributions from individual comrades in poetry and prose, and the brilliant conclusion was always one or more pen drawings made by the Führer.
The second part contained caricatures of prisoners and guards, usually accompanied by humorous verses, and humorous sketches, and descriptions of the life and activities of the generals and their entourage, followed by an extensive classifieds section. The entire newspaper was published under the motto "No sorrow for anyone, friendship for everyone!"
The ever-helpful, understanding reader of the "Landsberg Freeman", Adolf Hitler, always rejoiced with us from the bottom of his heart when an issue of our paper was particularly interesting and well-received. Once, just for fun, we even staged a mock feud with the press. The "Zellenbauern" and the "Rough Landsknechts" claimed to feel threatened by the tone of the paper, which they felt was too "noble and exclusive" in its editorial policy, and in the way it addressed them. Therefore, they distributed a witty

pamphlet inspired by Berthold Fischer and Edmund Schneider, which they dropped as a handout and used to attack the “Landsberg Freeman”. The “open letter” that appeared in the attacked paper in response, addressed to the “journalistic vagrants and authors of the tendentious diatribe,” left them all speechless. From that point on, the “Landsberg Freeman” had established itself as the only “official journal” of the National Socialist prisoners of Landsberg am Lech, completely and for all time.
Unfortunately, towards the end of our detention, an overly enthusiastic reader of this newspaper made the mistake of mentioning its existence in a letter to his relatives. The censor promptly found out about it and just as promptly considered searching the cells to get hold of this highly dangerous publication. But thanks to a brilliant feat of our intelligence service, we were informed of this threatening fact in time. To avoid the expected violent conflict with the law “for the protection of the Republic”, we had no choice but to condemn all existing copies of the “Landsberg Freeman” to immolation, and to carry out the sentence immediately in the large furnace of the day room. As difficult as this work of destruction was for us, it was the only way to save the editorial staff, the publishing house and all the employees from considerable prison sentences for defamation of public officials, disparaging the German Republic and its system of justice, endangering public order and safety, and other offenses against the Free State of Bavaria and its dark backers. Therefore, it has been impossible for us to preserve for posterity the interesting numbers of the “Landsberg Freeman” for future generations. We had to be content with having the historical merit of having awarded Adolf Hitler the honorary citizenship of Landsberg, which he has held since 1933, at a time when no one else even remotely dared to think of such a thing.
Only one issue of the newspaper, the sixth, which was dedicated to the theme of war and was published on August 4th, 1924, has been preserved by chance. It is included in the appendix of these memoirs.

Thanks to Papa Kriebels's skillful mediation, the Mufti, who was rarely generous on this occasion, granted a 10 o'clock curfew for our comradeship evenings. The respective beginning of such an evening was introduced by the dashing marches of the house band, which played more and more together. The music changed to landsknecht or soldier songs, in which all those gathered sang along vigorously. Adolf Hitler was particularly fond of the song “Vom Barette schwankt die Feder”[81], whereas we ourselves, probably out of a sense of longing for the “eternally feminine”, which was often painfully missed here, had solemnly chosen the popular soldier's song from the World War, “Annemarie, so ist mein Nam', den ich vom Bataillon bekam...”[82], was solemnly chosen as the Stoßtruppen cantus’ tune.

The Führer rose to give a brief but forceful speech, which always ended with the words “Now more than ever, Heil!”.

The short speech was followed by another song from the movement, sung with particular devotion with hands raised in greeting. We often also sang Dietrich Eckart's Sturmlied[83].
When the singing was over, high spirits and camaraderie took over. Large pots of tea or water cocoa were carried in by comrades and passed around the table. Recitals by the resident poet, performances from the “Überbrettl” and musical pieces alternated in colorful succession. The latest, still-hot-off-the-presses issue of the recently published “Landsberg Freeman” was distributed, and a comrade designated in advance read its most entertaining part as impressively as possible, with the help of appropriate gestures.
All too quickly, the happy hours pass. An unbreakable bond of loyal camaraderie united us all, from the Führer to the last member of the Stoßtruppen. It was a very special experience to see Adolf Hitler in our midst as a comrade among comrades. He heartily joined in every bit of fun, rejoiced in our joy, and faithfully did his part to keep the mood at its peak and to help us forget our minor and major everyday worries. A happy smirk or an understanding smile played around his lips when he also got his share while reading the newspaper.

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[81] “The Feather Sways From the Beret”
[82] Also known as “Mein Regiment, mein Heimatland”
[83] The anthem of the SA before being replaced by Horst-Wesel Lied.

On these evenings, the Führer and his followers, the generals and the soldiers, joined together in a community sworn to life and death, in which the old, tried and tested camaraderie of front-line soldiers celebrated a happy resurrection. The extent to which Adolf Hitler took part in these hours is shown by the word he found at the time, which, with his kind permission, is used as a motto to preface the content of this book:

"He who learns only to complain in adversity will never become its master!"

A Moment of Remembrance - August 1st, 1924

"Blossom, Germany, over my grave - young, strong and beautiful as a heroes' grove!"
- Walter Flex

We did not let any of the national days of mourning pass without dedicating a special hour of consecration to their significance. The anniversary of the signing of the shameful Versailles Dictate, the Scuttling of Scapa Flow[84], and the return of Sedan Day[85] saw us gathered around the Führer for such events.

The simple celebration of the tenth anniversary of August 1st, 1914, the day the war broke out, made a very special impression on me at the time. I will relate what the experience was, as it remained in my memory:

"A mild summer evening was falling over the little town of Landsberg am Lech. The sun, already low on the horizon, looked like a ball of red embers. Its last rays of fading light illuminated the gray walls and barred windows of our prison.
We Stoßtruppen had gathered in the day room and were waiting for Adolf Hitler, who wanted to give us an hour-long inauguration ceremony to commemorate that historic day ten years ago - the day the old world turned upside down. We sat at long tables covered with simple white tablecloths and decorated with a little greenery, dedicated to those surviving war volunteers from August 1914 who, true to their promise, had once again become 'voluntary soldiers', soldiers of Adolf Hitler, and who now, as his followers, desired to share the same fate with him.

What a difference between 1914 and 1924! A world of events had rushed past us in this short period of time, measured against eternal values, and had carried us along with it in its whirlwind. Wistfully and proudly at the same time, we recalled those August days of ten years ago and relived in our memories, in the twinkling of an eye, that great, hard and yet so unforgettable time of the war and post-war years. Armistice and November Revolt, the Spaa conferences and Versailles, soviet rule and civil war, Upper Silesia and the Baltic States, Erzberger and Rathenau, Ruhrkampf and Separatism, Inflation and the 9th of November 1923 - all the names and terms were awakened that had become fateful milestones for our fatherland and thus for our own path of suffering since those dark November days of 1918, up to the very present.
It seemed almost incredible to us that we had experienced all of this and gone through it ourselves, fearing and worrying, acting and hoping. So lost in thought, our conversations had rushed backwards in time.

In the meantime, Lieutenant Kriebel and Dr. Weber had entered the room. Our "house band" struck up the "Badenweiler March." Then he came, the simple, unknown corporal of the World War, a front-line soldier like us, but who, according to our unbending will, would one day become the leader of the entire German people.
We leaped to our feet, stood silent and rigid, voluntarily united in iron discipline and camaraderie. Slowly Adolf Hitler passed through our ranks, looking each of us in the eye and greeting us, as if he wanted to look into the soul of each and every one of us at their core. We took our seats and soon the old familiar melodies of our war and soldier songs resounded through the room, as bright and clear and confident of victory as they were when we still carried them as war volunteers through almost all of Europe. Then one of our comrades spoke, who had fought in the most bitter and bloodiest battle on the Western Front. His

[84] Referring to June 21st, 1919, when a fleet of German vessels in Scapa Flow decided to scuttle themselves rather than be handed to the British following the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.
[85] "Sedantag" was a semi-official memorial day within the German Empire to commemorate the victorious Battle of Sedan on September 2nd, 1870, which resulted in the capture of Napoleon III and 100,000 men.

retrospective account of "Before Verdun" took us back to those days when we were so terribly close to death and so infinitely far from life, back to that hell of the World War that consumed the flowers of the German and the French armies, day after day and month after month, in never-ending storms of steel. Once again, the speaker led us in spirit in the assault on "Douaumont", on "Fort Baux", on "Fleury" and "Height 304", up to the "Toten Mann" and down into the dark, battle-torn "Totenschlucht"[86], to then finally stop at the long row of graves and craters, which have absorbed the bodies of so many of our contemporaries and comrades in their grenade-torn and mine-plowed earth.
Solemnly, like a chorale, the song of the "Good Comrade" sounded through our ranks, standing at attention, fading away and sliding over into the so wistful and memory-rich verses of the Song of the German Western Front: "The Song of the Argonne Forest."

In solemn silence, we commemorated millions of our fallen comrades who would never see their homeland again, because, in the poor vocabulary of man, they are dead. But we knew in this hour that they nevertheless lived and were alive in us, their comrades of yore, and in our will, which once was also their will.
Their and our most faithful comrade, then still a herald, but today the executor of their will then spoke:

ADOLF HITLER

In a long and tremendous speech, he revealed to us consequences that, ten years ago, came about partly from the aberrations of individuals, partly from the guilt and mistakes of entire peoples, and partly from the intrigues and schemes of deluded diplomats and ambitious heads of government - all together plunged all of Europe and, in its wake, the entire world into incalculable misfortune. He showed us the myriad connections between cause and effect in clear, merciless logic and taught us to understand and grasp these terrible events in all their details and contexts.
He spoke of the unspeakable misery that the war had brought upon almost all of humanity, and the irreparable material and cultural loss that it had cost both victor and vanquished. He commemorated the unparalleled achievements of the nameless German soldier, the almost unbelievable feat of strength that enabled the entire German nation to withstand a multitude of enemies for four long years, and touched on the thousand horrors of modern war, from the horror of material battles[87] to the monstrosity of the hunger blockade. He described the treasonous subversive activities of the men of November, who had initiated the collapse of the fatherland and treacherously stabbed the front-line soldiers, who fought, bled and died for Germany to the very end, in the back.
Once again, the inhuman provisions of the so-called armistice and the even more sadistic and hateful dictates of the Treaty of Versailles passed before our minds' eyes. We gained a clear understanding of what it means to be a people defamed and degraded for decades, with the help of a confession of guilt extorted under threat, and we learned to understand that external defencelessness and lack of dignity, combined with internal discord and disintegration, can seal the downfall of a great nation within a few decades. We knew better than ever that we must continue to fight and sacrifice, regardless of all possible setbacks, and in spite of all hostility, until the goal that Adolf Hitler had set for himself and his followers was achieved - not just for us, but for Germany.

Spontaneously and glowing with enthusiasm, as we had done in the August days of 1914, we sang "Wacht am Rhein" and the "Deutschlandlied". Like an oath, the singing penetrated through the barred windows into the silent, starry evening, far into the valley of the Lech, echoing over to the old walls of the city of Landsberg, proclaiming that here, the nameless German soldier, hard, rough and strong-willed, would

[86] Meaning "Death Ravine", a particular spot in Verdun that saw fierce fighting and noted by contemporaries at the time.
[87] Material battles, or "Materialschlachten" refers to the shift from strategic battles to battles reliant on resources during the First World War.

never rest or give up until Germany, led by the unknown corporal, would again be great and free, worthy of a better future, and worthy of the countless sacrifices that had been made for it.
On evenings like this, when Adolf Hitler, in a well-paced, flowing speech, touched on a variety of events worthy of consideration, and his deep voice penetrated doors and corridors. The fortress guards stood silently together outside in the stairwell, listening to his words; in the courtyard below, they gathered under the open windows of the day room and listened to the speech being delivered to them just as devoutly as we did. No one, whether prisoner or guard, was able to escape the powerful, stirring words of Adolf Hitler. In such moments, the bars and walls seemed to fall away, and every division between those gathered outside and those gathered inside was blurred.
Thus we experienced many an uplifting and unforgettable evening, drawing from it new strength and new courage for the times to come.

Serious and Light-Hearted Stories from the Fortress

"Because we desire, hope and want our nation to regain the strength of self-assertion, we want this nation to keep its nerve, to rejoice in the community, the people and the fatherland!"

- **Dr. Robert Ley**

The days slowly turned into weeks. Even more slowly, the weeks turned into months. Sometimes it seemed as if time had come to a complete stop. The specter of boredom crept silently through the fortress, spreading through the cells and corridors and stifling our happy laughter. We racked our brains to find more variety; we thought of ways to fight the unfamiliar, soporific idleness to the best of our ability. In doing so, we came up with the strangest ideas.
One began to write a war diary[88], another tried to learn shorthand. Some comrades joined together to form a "riddle solver" club and sweated bullets trying to solve crosswords, syllable puzzles and other rebuses. They read all the available newspapers and magazines. Long-forgotten tenets of geometry and algebra were subjected to renewed study. We didn't even shy away from learning foreign languages.

The biggest striver and undoubtedly the most courageous fighter against boredom was Hermann Fobke. Full of the best and most honorable intentions, he set about getting his doctorate in law in all seriousness; consequently, he began by announcing his laudable intention to all the fortress inmates. After eight days had passed, he had succeeded in getting the news of the upcoming battle to reach even the farthest corners of the cell block. Even the otherwise completely uninterested Hauseln had heard that something big was about to happen. His announcement to us all sparked great astonishment and enormous respect for Hermann Fobkes' noble work ethic.
Then, all of a sudden, it became completely quiet around the legal student for three days and three nights. Strictly avoiding any disturbance of his praiseworthy activities, we only dared to enter Cell No. 11 at night to sleep, spending our time either in the day room or as guests with other comrades. Meanwhile, Hermann ruled in our room with imposing solitude and absolute authority. At his desk, covered with legal works and commentaries, he sat deep in thought, furrowed his forehead in serious, dignified wrinkles, smoked one heavy cigar after another and strained his mind.
Understandably, we who were billeted elsewhere were very interested in the progress of the doctoral thesis. Therefore, after three days had passed, comrade Gerum, the oldest in the room, dared to cautiously ask the silent thinker, on behalf of all of us, how much of the writing had already been completed. Gerum should not have done that, because like a roaring lion, the industrious little Hermann leaped from his chair, paced the room, wildly threw books and notebooks around, and declared that he was at his wits' end. In the company of us uneducated jungle dwellers, it was hardly possible to form a rational thought, let alone put it down on paper in an orderly fashion. He, the prospective doctor of law, had to vigorously object to the constant disruption and the completely inappropriate interest in his work. Apart from himself, none of us have the composure to overlook the value and difficulties of a doctoral thesis. Moreover, he now wants his own study, because a dissertation can only be tackled productively in the strictest seclusion.
Gerum returned to us after his exploration, scratching his left ear with concern. As good comrades we sat down together and discussed how to help Hermann. By chance, we ran into Emil Maurice from the Generals' Wing. We slowed the haste of his step and informed him of the doctoral candidate's grave distress. This could perhaps be helped, said our ever-helpful comrade, and he hurried away. He went straight to the Führer.
Adolf Hitler, always concerned for the well-being of his followers and always ready to fulfill their reasonable wishes within the bounds of possibility, ordered that a suitable room in the Generals' Wing be cleared for the ambitious Stoßtruppmann. This was done, and the aforementioned Stoßtruppmann took

[88] A "Kriegstagebuch" is a record of wartime events such as casualties, operations and unit activities.

possession of the study provided to him without much ado, visibly satisfied, and carefully escorted by his intercessor Maurice.
Once again, our comrade Fobke was surrounded by silence and storm for days. Hermann was absent from gymnastics, which was understandable – that he was absent from a walk was difficult to comprehend – but that he was even absent from lunch was unacceptable. Comrade Frosch was amazed at this last fact. "He must be crazy to push his brain like this," he said, shaking his head, "I have to go and see what kind of trouble a worker like that has on his mind." Then he disappeared in the direction of the Generals' Wing and entered the hermit's room under the pretext of borrowing a cigarette. Surprisingly quickly, and without his cigarettes, he had found his way back to us. "Damn those academics, I'd rather be stuck with my sharpest dogs when they haven't eaten in eight days! That devil hit me with his papers on my head and a few thuds of his books on the eyes - I can barely see!"
In view of this failure of the diligent dog breeder, which could not be denied, Maurice, with his innate sense of diplomatic intervention, finally decided to ascertain the current state of affairs. His "demarche"[89] was also unsuccessful. Hermann raised a completely undiplomatic cry of protest, showered the brave Emil, who had entered his hermitage, with a multitude of significant insults, and finally claimed that without the use of relevant books and works, one could not possibly complete a doctoral dissertation like his.
Maurice withdrew quietly, but met Field Marshal Kriebel in the hallway, who had been attracted by the noise. The negotiator reported the result of his investigations to him, and Papa Kriebel decided to intervene helpfully and as quickly as possible.
In the next meeting, he described the plight of Fobke, who was so diligently pondering his task, to the Mufti and the Under-Mufti in the most vivid and moving colors. He appealed to the collegial compassion of the two administrative lawyers, who greedily seized the opportunity to turn a hopeless "traitor" into a useful member of the state-preserving legal profession.
To the utmost astonishment of these unsuspecting mercenaries, the next day the Hausel, under the supervision of the duty sergeant, incessantly dragged thick folios and bulging bundles of files from the registries and offices of the institution's administration, which they neatly piled up in the Klausner's[90] room. Everything that could be found in the way of relevant works and writings was brought by the tireless Hausels, panting up and down the stairs, and piled high around the desk of the hard-working fanatic. Soon the desk and writer had disappeared so far behind the high wall of books and files that only the blond shock of hair of the living walled-in man remained visible to the peering eyes.
After these laborious preparations, another silence followed. For days, the hermit's room steamed and seethed. The cigar smoke became thicker and thicker, and Hermann Fobke grew paler and paler. Ever more serious and dignified wrinkles appeared on his forehead.
Finally, after ten days, the door of the study opened, and the exhausted hermit staggered out. News of the reappearance of Fobke spread like wildfire through the fortress. We rushed to offer our congratulations to the persistent hard worker. We surrounded him with curiosity and wanted to see the difficult doctoral thesis, the writing of which had cost so much thought and reflection, so much effort and work and so many cigars and health, and had produced such tremendous and admirable asceticism.
With a majestic gesture, the returning hermit stopped our urging. He cleared his throat and puffed out his chest. In well-chosen words, but with a hoarse voice, the tone of which still clearly showed the strain of the last few weeks of concentrated intellectual work, he announced the following: After the most difficult inner struggle, he had finally given up the fight with the dragon known as "Roman law". This law, as he had clearly established in the days of intense mental strain that now lay behind him, was so foreign to the German people and their way of thinking that he, as a convinced National Socialist, had not even been able to come up with a title for his doctoral thesis, despite all his serious efforts.
We listened in amazement to the strange news. It took us quite a while to even grasp this surprising message from our comrade, intellectually. But then our truly Homeric laughter almost shook the

[89] Meaning a political step or initiative.
[90] A German word meaning hermit.

foundations of the fortress, for we laughed at the incredible discovery until tears streamed down both our cheeks. But to this day, his doctoral thesis remains unfinished.

This failure of the well-meaning Hermann Fobke was by no means an isolated incident. Many comrades experienced a similar fate in their attempts at intellectual activity. The longer the imprisonment lasted, the more severe and lasting the shadows it cast over our minds, paralyzing all productive activity. We were all too accustomed to freedom and its untrammeled existence to not to feel the harshness of captivity more and more as time went on.
This was soon noticed in the Generals' Wing, and preventive resolutions were passed to break the slowly creeping “prison psychosis” from the outset.
With the permission of the prison administration, a column of high-traitors willing to do volunteer work was formed. Hermann Kriebel took charge of the group. Working clothes made of drill fatigues and the necessary tools were provided by the prison ward. As soon as all the preparatory details had been arranged by the group leader, the group set to work every morning at eight o'clock with picks, shovels, hoes and rakes to improve the gardens and paths.
For this purpose, the column was divided into three parts. The first section was put in charge of the vegetable garden by the knowledgeable Gerum. Weeding, digging plant holes, etc. were their main tasks. The second detachment built a new garden path according to comrade Hamm's technical specifications. The gravel and other supplies needed for this were brought by the third detachment, which was directly under Papa Kriebels' command. Hamm and Gerum constantly complained about a lack of manpower. Surprisingly, the much harder work of gravel extraction and gravel driving attracted all those willing to work with an almost magical force; the latter work offered the first and only opportunity to be outside the walls.
The gravel pit was only a few hundred meters away from the fortress building, but on the other side of the high outer wall. To get to this workplace, we had to leave through a side gate into the open air and thus enjoyed a mere glimpse of freedom, which was only an enticing mirage, but it was enough to make our hearts beat faster with joy.
In the quarry, the stone was first pecked and chopped until the sparks flew. The extracted material was then thrown through large sieves and finally shoveled into two-wheeled tipping carts that had been provided. In the absence of draft animals, we then harnessed ourselves to the carts and with “huzzah, hurray and hoot”, we sped toward the unloading point in the fortress courtyard. The detachments of weed pullers, road builders and gravel drivers alternated with each other on a daily basis, so that each of the comrades could indulge in the rare opportunity to work outside the fortress. Of course, we were also guarded by carbine-toting prison guards during this work, so that we would not forget to re-enter the prison once we finished; however, it did not in the least detract from our joy at being able to be outside the walls for once.

The guard at the side gate had gradually become accustomed to seeing the gravel trucks driving in and out constantly during the daily working hours. Papa Kriebel, as an old soldier full of stratagems, well aware that habit tends to dull even the sharpest vigilance in the long run, decided to verify the correctness of this strategic experience. He ordered six men to fetch a handcart, took command and set off with his detachment and the vehicle. Partly engaged in harmless conversation, partly warbling a little song to himself, the seven approached the guard. Quite habitually, the guard opened the gate, and seconds later a general and six men had found themselves alone in the open. The guard had completely forgotten that it was not the official work hours, and therefore no supervising prison guard had been posted outside in the grounds. Papa Kriebels' first calculation had thus already proved correct, and the second proved to be just as correct, because the guard who was relieved soon after forgot to report the departure of a work detail to his relief.
It was only hours later that he suddenly remembered by chance that he had opened the gate to freedom for a group of laborers some time ago. He was seized by sudden fright.

The telephone rang loudly from the guardroom to the control center and back again. Shortly thereafter, several distraught police officers appeared in the fortress. Full of apprehension, they counted the “heads of their loved ones” with trembling index fingers and it turned out that “a whole seven” were missing. A veritable flood of questions rushed over us at this realization. We behaved as stupidly and narrow-mindedly as a herd of sheep without a leader. No, we knew nothing about those missing. We had not even noticed their absence ourselves. We were completely bewildered that something like this was even possible.

In a flurry of excitement, the constables rushed off. Minutes later, the Mufti himself appeared on the scene. His entire administrative staff marched behind him. Hurriedly, almost forgetting his usual calm dignity, he strode to the Generals’ Wing. The anteroom was completely empty. The Mufti felt a little dizzy at the prospect of a disciplinary proceeding for abetting escape. But he summoned up his courage and knocked energetically on the Führer's door. What if he too had escaped? – It was unthinkable!

“Come in,” said Adolf Hitler's sonorous voice. Almost audibly, a whole boulder fell from the Mufti's heart. He opened the door and hastily asked the Führer a few questions about the whereabouts of General Kriebel and his companions. But Adolf Hitler, much as he regretted it, was unable to provide any satisfactory information either. He had been sitting at his desk all morning, he said, and was glad to have a moment of peace and quiet to work. Unfortunately, he did not know anything about the missing men or their whereabouts.

The otherwise dignified Mufti was almost tempted to utter a curse. But he thought better of it and quickly left with his distraught guards. The shrill sound of the telephone now increased, the frightened alarm bells began to ring. The steam siren of the enginehouse sent its alarm call out over the fortress area in long drawn-out tones. The guard squad entered the scene, marching dully. As if pursued by the wild hunt, they rushed through the grounds. The general alarm was in full swing. We enjoyed this tumultuous, never-before-seen spectacle. The Führer, standing at the lattice of his window, followed the exciting turmoil from a high vantage point, amazed.

Meanwhile, outside the wall, deep in the rearmost corner of the gravel pit, seven men had been working hard and diligently. From time to time, they had looked into each other's dust-encrusted faces, smiling mischievously in anticipation of the coming fun. Every now and then they paused from shoveling and pickaxing and listened intently above them. But all remained quiet and still. Then suddenly the howling of the siren and the shrill sound of the alarm bells pierced the silence of the peaceful midday.

“Children, the Mufti has gone mad!” Papa Kriebel declared with satisfaction. “Now the chase can begin,” he continued, gripping the handle of his pickaxe more tightly and getting down to work as if he meant to exploit the gravel deposit completely by the end of the day. The team followed his example, so that soon thick clouds of dust rose from the bottom of the pit and rolled lazily over the surrounding fields.

Meanwhile, in the fortress, the actions drilled for such events were carried out as planned. Chains of marksmen were formed to scour the terrain. Special search parties were put together. Police dogs were brought in.

In the middle of these planned preparations, a breathless sergeant burst in and reported: He had seen dust clouds coming out of the gravel pit while standing at the courtyard gate. This prompted him to go and see for himself. And, believe it or not, the presumed fugitives were all so absorbed in their work that they had not only failed to hear the general alarm but even his shout.

The return of the missing seven was a real triumph. The much-tried Mufti could not help but shake hands with the imaginative sergeant, who had first discovered the hard-working gravel shovellers, in front of the assembled team; at that moment he was even prepared to grant full absolution to his most insubordinate adversary, the powerful and cunning Papa Kriebel, for all the trouble he had caused him so far and would cause him in the future. The leader of the column of the missing men beamed with the greatest joy, and you could tell how good it made him feel to have caused his friend, the Mufti, such severe fear and terror in return for the unjustly refused chest of drawers.

Our physical labor, for which the Führer had characteristically coined the term “work service” (Arbeitsdienst), which was still unknown at the time, earned us a small material benefit. For the hours worked, several pfennigs were credited to our financial accounts. It was not much, but it was enough to

buy a few cigarettes or a lemonade. Finally, when the administration of the institution was convinced by our performance that we were actually able to do physical work and were not ashamed of manual labor, we received half a liter of beer per worker and per working day free of charge with our meal. This additional allowance was granted for all working days from then on. This was greatly appreciated by many of us who were always thirsty and for whom water cocoa had long since lost its initial appeal.
The Führer had welcomed our decision to do physical labor. He never missed a chance to watch us march into the fortress courtyard at the end of the working day, our tools shouldered, our heads covered by large, wide-brimmed straw hats, singing cheerful marching songs.

One fine day, one of our clever comrades was suddenly seized by a severe toothache. It didn't get any better, even though his bride and now wife had lovingly visited him for comfort on the day the pain started. Probably at her concerned suggestion, he entrusted himself to an examination by the medicine man. And he did the right thing.
A miracle occurred. The crafty comrade was immediately referred to the dentist for proper treatment. This friendly man lived in the middle of the city of Landsberg, and therefore the tooth-sick man could visit him there. This was an event of such revolutionary uniqueness that its occurrence was not even foreseen in the otherwise so far-sighted fortress rules.
The toothaches were not a one-time occurrence. They doubled, quadrupled, sixteen-folded. No sooner had the referral slip been issued for the first patient than a whole bunch of suddenly tooth-sick prisoners showed up in the infirmary; as they did, the medicine man became strangely hard and merciless to them. Only the first person to be afflicted with toothache walked alone with his cheek swollen up, dressed in his Sunday best and accompanied by our good wishes, as an honest stroller to the dentist's office. Hot on his heels, a prison guard dressed in civilian clothes to avoid causing an unpleasant stir followed him; the latter had to make sure that his charge did not suddenly get lost in the unfamiliar city traffic or even get lost in the tangle of narrow streets and alleys, never to be seen again.
Eventually it was decided that the dentist was to be summoned to the fortress building itself because of the frequent dental issues. However, this was not done - on the one hand, the toothache had now gone away again and, on the other hand, on closer inspection, we were not in a position to cover the treatment costs. Unfortunately, the latter was all too true.

We had all become homeless and as poor as church mice. The representatives of the ruling system had no hesitation in immediately initiating the appropriate disciplinary proceedings against those former owners of state and municipal civil positions, such as Fiehler, Reichhart, Hamm and Gerum, on the basis of their criminal conviction for abetting high treason. Insofar as this had not already happened during the criminal proceedings themselves, it was all the more thoroughly carried out during the period of detention. Nobody asked what would become of the affected persons and their families. If the latter still had an official or government apartment, they were ruthlessly and mercilessly put out on the street from one day to the next. The rulers of the November Republic and their willing enforcement officers did not shy away from any measure, no matter how brutal, to crush Adolf Hitler and his followers along with their closest relatives. We, the employees in the public sector and the workers in the free economy, tradesmen, merchants or freelancers, were not much better off. Partly out of cowardice, partly out of malice, partly out of calculation and servility towards the system and its supporters, they rushed to please the system by firing us all. Some wanted to take petty revenge by such measures for daring to have a different political opinion from our respective employers. Others wanted to make it known that they had nothing whatsoever in common with us and our “reprehensible” actions. But no one wanted to expose themselves by continuing to employ a traitor.
So, they all joined forces to ruin Adolf Hitler and his men, whom they were unable to break physically or mentally, at least economically, for years to come.

Far more serious than this economic hardship, however, were the many psychological hardships that we faced. “Good friends,” “concerned acquaintances” and “life-experienced relatives” uninvitedly acted as

our judges, pulling out all the stops of bourgeois indignation or hypocritical pity, often making life a difficult but bearable torment for our relatives, mainly our lonely wives. “Dreamers, irresponsible fellows, out-of-control mercenaries, for whom peace and order, freedom and development are unknown concepts, who run after hollow, not to be taken seriously phrases into certain doom”, that's what they called us in the circles of the satiated, oh so law-abiding bourgeoisie. Instead of providing for their families like decent, responsible men, we meddled in matters that did not concern us, they continued. Everything that could be scraped together from Jewish-Marxist poison kitchens in the way of defamatory and slanderous material was poured out over the Führer and us.
The fact that we had to look on helplessly and defenselessly as they tried to turn our closest relatives against us, to influence their relationship with us adversely and to deprive them of their faith in Adolf Hitler and his mission at all costs, was the darkest and most trying aspect of our captivity. The fact that all these malevolent attempts, these malicious whispers, these open acts of ostracism against our wives and relatives, who often lived in the most bitter material poverty, were not at all successful, proves best of all how strongly our will and our faith in the Führer had already taken root in their souls.
The Führer was aware of our worries and knew about these mental hardships without us having to talk to him about them. He persistently did everything and often more than we thought was within his power to improve our material situation. He himself, who had as little of his own fortune as we did, gave all of the little he had left. Through his personal connections, he helped to ensure that his fellow prisoners who were particularly in need received small donations from time to time to help them meet their most pressing daily needs or to support their families who were suffering. At his instigation, we soon received parcels containing extra food and all kinds of tobacco from the most diverse sources. Many of Adolf Hitler's visitors brought him food parcels, among these often being large tins of excellent meat salad. These were donated by the Bechstein family, who were friends of the Führer, and their gifts were particularly appreciated by us.
We are still grateful today to many old, unknown male and female party members who, despite their own hardship and the most difficult struggle for survival, constantly sent donations to us or our relatives, enabling us at least to make our or our families' material existence more bearable.
During his lifetime, Papa Kriebels never failed to commemorate the wives and mothers of the fortress prisoners with words of honor every year as we gathered in the Capital of the Movement on the respective anniversaries of November 9th, 1923.

Left to their own resources, these women bravely took up the fight for survival. They endured much deprivation and hostility with tenacity and silence. They did not shy away from any work, quickly deciding to switch to any kind of employment or getting by with housework. Often they had to save up the money for their visits to Landsberg from hand to mouth. They did everything to encourage their husbands and sons and to make it easier for them to endure by keeping their own hardships and worries to themselves. In this time of need, they have become our best and most loyal comrades, and have sacrificed their fair share to help us survive those difficult months. They shared our joy when they managed to outwit the censors or the camp administration in some small, more or less harmless way, and they often showed extraordinary courage and a willingness to take responsibility in their endeavors.
For example, the fiancée and now wife of one of our comrades managed to secretly smuggle a tiny camera and loaded film cassette to her groom during visits, and to smuggle exposed films out of the fortress just as unnoticed - it is therefore entirely thanks to her that the photographs of life in the fortress, which were taken despite the strictest surveillance, were not confiscated but found their way to freedom. Everything had been so delicately and carefully organized that the high-level administration of the institution had no idea that, despite its many security precautions, photographs had even been taken.

On the orders of Adolf Hitler, Gerum was entrusted with the proper storage and fair distribution of all incoming donations and was ceremoniously appointed “Provisions Master” by Field Marshal Kriebel. The provisions office was the large wardrobe in Cell No. 11. The number of battles he had to fight with the

always-hungry men because of the additional portions, which, in their opinion, were always too small, was countless; his battle against the insatiable cigarette devourer Franz Fröschl never came to an end.

Our own standard of living was very modest and unassuming. Adolf Hitler himself lived very frugally. He took almost none of the donations that came to him for himself; everything went to Gerum's always receptive provisions office. Again and again we admired the Führer's incredible frugality and lack of interest in bodily pleasures. Not even our favorite drink, water cocoa, seemed to taste good to him. He remained loyal to his natural lemonade. He strictly refused to eat meat. Black bread, fruit and vegetables, and now and then a piece of donated cake or a bar of chocolate, were enough to sustain him.

Adolf Hitler always used the birthdays of his fellow prisoners as an opportunity to give the respective birthday boy a treat. Emil Maurice had carefully noted the dates of birth of the individual comrades at his request. When the day of the celebration approached, the comrade to be celebrated was invited to a convivial gathering in the cozy corner of the Generals' Wing in the afternoon or evening. The Führer always had a small, personally selected gift for the celebration. The field marshals also honored the same custom and contributed to the celebration.

A letter from Paul Hirschberg describes such an event:

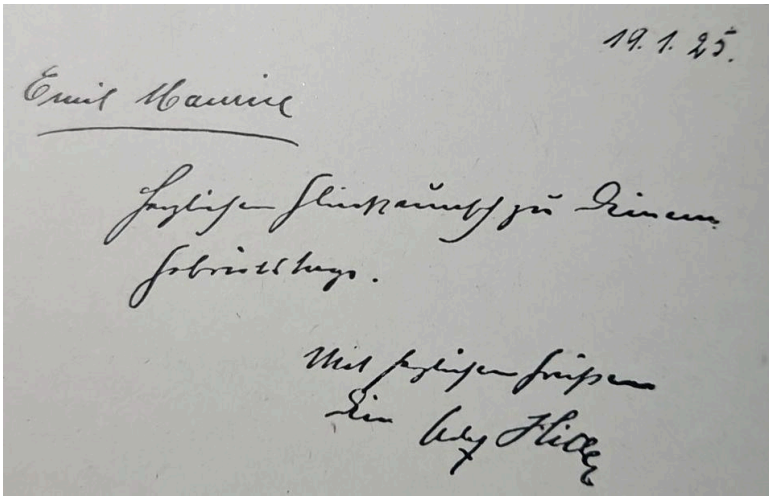
"The day before yesterday, I turned 23. I would never have dreamt that I would have to spend a birthday as a locked-up "high traitor" in a fortress.
Early in the morning, shortly after I had my coffee, Adolf Hitler suddenly appeared in my room, with a whole armful of goodies and offered me his warmest congratulations. You can hardly imagine my joy and pride. Just as I was about to lie down for an afternoon nap after eating, Maurice came to me and asked me, very mysteriously, to follow him. All of a sudden, I found myself in the anteroom from which one enters the rooms of the Führer and his generals. In the corner stood a festively decorated coffee table. Between Adolf Hitler and Lieutenant Colonel Kriebel there was a wicker chair kept free, on which I had to sit. I will never forget the two hours I then spent in the circle of the "main traitors" for as long as I live. Even if we have no pleasant memories of these times and our life here, we will still be very proud later on, as we are already today, to have spent these hours together with our greatest German as martyrs for the holy German cause. You cannot imagine the tremendous power and inspiring fire that emanates from Adolf Hitler and the ardent love and devotion with which we all cling to this man.

We often sing a new song now, based on an old lansquenet melody:

"First it was called loyalty for loyalty,
then it was called treason,
then it came to fratricide
In a German town.

Scoundrels may falter,
But honor remains.
We will thank the men
Who goes to the fortress today.

Because with Hitler go his Kriebel,
His Weber, and us.
We will all follow faithfully,
Man for man, Germans first!"



Adolf Hitler's birthday greeting to Emil Maurice, January 19th, 1925

One morning, around 9 o'clock, all the Stoßtruppen were suddenly called up by name by the sergeant on duty and led to the administration building.
“It almost looks like a general report!” said Karl Fiehler with concern. ‘What have you all been up to behind my back?’ he began to ask.
But no one was able to provide an answer. We searched our consciences in amazement, but unanimously concluded that for once we really had nothing to worry about.
“Well, they won't let us out, will they?” speculated Berthold Fischer, full of hope.
“What if the Third Reich has broken out and we don't even know it?“ interjected Edmund Schneider with his dry sense of humor.
“The boss would be wide-eyed if you were right,” replied Otto Feichmayr, our baby of the family.
“Don't talk such nonsense,” Gerum stopped the torrent of words. ”You are still not sufficiently aware of the seriousness of the criminal justice system. You capital buffaloes![91] They must have come up with something new, those November gentlemen, so that they can keep us in here even longer!”
When we arrived in the large meeting room, we lined up in two rows. No sooner had we done so than the pointed-bearded senior administrator, accompanied by a man in official civilian clothes who looked imposing in his rimless glasses, entered the room. The senior administrator's companion, who had remained unknown to us until then, turned out to be the bailiff from the Landsberg District Court. “Aha, he's here to bill us for our legal costs,” murmured Otto Reichhart resignedly. However, that was not the case. The important emissary of the state collection agency handed each of us an extensive statement of claim from the Munich SPD post office. On the basis of this writ, a petition was filed for us to be held jointly and severally liable in the civil courts for the damages caused to that poison factory on account of our visit, plus court costs and other expenses, for the considerable sum of 36,406.61 German marks. Furthermore, according to the claim of the Jewish lawyers of the plaintiff, we should pay an annual interest rate of 36 percent on the aforementioned sum, calculated from the date of the filing of the lawsuit. We were flabbergasted.
“That's really something,” Rosenwink broke the general silence. ”Is this true?”
Yes, unfortunately, it was, and the pages of the civil suit left no doubt about this fact.
Pretty soon, we were sitting together in the day room, feeling rather dejected. Candidate of Law Fobke had taken over the discussion. According to his remarks, it was to be expected that we would be sentenced by the civil courts of the system to pay 100 percent of the costs. Where should we poor landsknechts find the many sequins to pay our lawyers? How could we ever raise the exorbitant sum to

[91] Not exactly sure if this is a colloquialism, did not find any info on it.

pay the usurious calculated alleged debt in the event of an anticipated defeat? These were questions and problems to which none of us knew the answers.
Meanwhile, the Führer, through the loyal Maurice, had been informed of our worries. He, the much-troubled man, also took this heavy burden from our weak shoulders. With his own energy and unsurpassable camaraderie, he made our cause his own. He instructed his lawyer to represent the party, to file an action to set aside the resolution, to delay court dates and to postpone the judgment by skillful tactics until after the party had been rebuilt, thus creating the opportunity to quietly settle the matter with an extremely favorable settlement.

A few days after our meeting with the bailiff, our comrades who had so far been granted a stay of punishment gradually arrived at the fortress.
Defendant No. 6, Wilhelm Laforce, the brother of our comrade Karl Laforce who had fallen at the Feldherrnhalle, was the first to arrive. He was followed shortly afterwards by Defendant No. 13, the late comrade Erhard Heiden, and Defendant No. 31, Johann Mahr, the senior member of the Stoßtrupp.
We regarded Mahr as a living image of duty to the utmost. On the night of November 8th-9th, 1923, he had been appointed head of our Stoßtrupp's recruitment office. In this capacity, he officiated in our meeting place, the bowling alley of the Torbräu at the Isartor; there he sifted through the volunteers who had signed up for our cause from all walks of life in response to the events of the national uprising, recruiting the most suitable of them for the Stoßtrupp. The brave Johann Mahr drummed up recruits so selflessly and dutifully that he was completely unaware of the collapse of the uprising and all its consequences. Since we, too, had completely forgotten in the hustle and bustle of events to notify our capable recruiter in good time of the change in circumstances, he was still at his post when the high police appeared and was about to arrest him and the recruits without further ado. At the last minute, comrade Mahr managed to slip into a civilian coat and, unrecognized by the persecutors, to mingle with the curious crowd that had gathered to watch the expected spectacle. Unfortunately, in his haste, he had left the recruitment lists, each with his signature on it, at the recruitment office. The police found them and so, as a result of our senior member's selfless fulfillment of his duty, we were all sentenced to a prison term of one year and three months.
Mahr could not forgive himself for a long time for leaving the list behind. It took him quite a while to regain his inner balance and his genuine Munich sociability, with which he so often delighted us on gloomy days.
Johann Mahr was followed by the always good-humored student Walter Hewel, who was up for all kinds of pranks, Defendant No. 36, and the inseparable companion of his short shag pipe, Julius Schaub, Defendant No. 40.
Julius Schaub had actually been swept into the ranks of the Stoßtrupp by the whims of unpredictable chance. He himself reports on how it came about:

"Late in the evening of November 8th, 1923, I was sent by Adolf Hitler as a courier to Freising in Upper Bavaria to alert the local Stoßtrupp and to inform them that the national revolution had been proclaimed in Munich.
In the early morning hours of November 9th, I returned from Freising to Munich and reported to Adolf Hitler that his order had been carried out. The Führer immediately gave me a new assignment and sent me to Munich City Hall because the city council, which was heavily influenced by Marxism at the time, refused to raise the swastika flag; the Social Democratic and Communist city councilors had even managed to ensure that a swastika flag that had been raised by our party members on the city hall had been taken down again.
At the same time that I arrived at the Marienplatz in front of the City Hall, the Stoßtrupp also arrived on trucks. The leader of the Stoßtrupp, Comrade Berchtold, immediately provided me with a group of his men so that I could give my instructions to the city council more emphasis. Together with the Stoßtruppen, I made my way through the crowds of people filling the Rathausplatz, head to head, and shortly afterwards entered the meeting room of the city council on the first floor of the town hall, where the

council members were currently in session. Here I ordered the arrest of the Marxist and Communist city councilors on behalf of the new government and had them escorted to the trucks of the Stoßtrupp standing on Marienplatz. Then we transported the city fathers under their cover to the Bürgerbräukeller, where I presented them to Adolf Hitler and General Ludendorff.
Meanwhile, the Stoßtrupp, Bund Oberland and Reichskriegsflagge, began the memorable propaganda march to the Feldherrnhalle. The arrested city councilors were initially supposed to be taken along during the march, but were then left behind on Adolf Hitler's orders.
After the clash at the Feldherrnhalle, I returned to the Bürgerbräukeller and, with the help of the Stoßtruppen, transported the captured city fathers to Höhenkirchen in the east of Munich, where they were then released.

Shortly after the collapse of the national uprising, the Attorney General of the Free State of Bavaria issued a warrant for my arrest. I fled to Carinthia, where I stayed for several months with the leader of the Stoßtrupp, Party member Berchtold, and worked as a founder of local groups and SA formations of the NSDAP. In April 1924, however, I voluntarily surrendered to the People's Court at the Munich District Court, which was then conducting the trial against the Stoßtrupp Hitler. So, I ended up in the dock with them."

When Julius finally arrived at the fortress, he presented himself as if nothing had changed and immediately placed himself at the personal disposal of his boss. He reliably, punctually and unobtrusively took care of Adolf Hitler's well-being. Only in the presence of his boss did he part with his eternally smoking and soothing pipe, with which he was in the habit of filling all the rooms of the fortress with the unpleasant smell of tobacco substitute.
Julius Schaub's refreshing sincerity, inner cheerfulness and native wit made him a good and well-liked comrade, who, even today, when his limited free time allows it, still feels quite at home in the circle of his old comrades-in-arms from Stoßtrupp Hitler.

Later, the contemplative student and exemplary comrade Hans Eduard Krüger, Defendant No. 35, along with his chemistry-studying colleague, the always cheerful Gerhard Hoff, Defendant No. 30, also appeared.

Thus, all the convicted Stoßtruppen had now been gathered at Landsberg Fortress. Only two were missing, and we missed them very much.
Josef Berchtold, the brave leader of our troop, to whom we were all loyal, had left the country at the express request of Adolf Hitler to avoid the particularly severe punishment that he, as the leader of our former undertakings, had to expect. The Führer's order sent him first to Styria and then to Klagenfurt, the capital of Carinthia. There Berchtold was to await developments until either Adolf Hitler's release or an amnesty that would spare him and his family further prosecution. Thus our Stoßtruppführer, with a heavy heart but with his customary discipline following Adolf Hitler's instructions, had to renounce being imprisoned together with his men. For more than a year he lived a restless and fugitive life in the present-day southeastern part of the Reich, dependent on the tolerance of the then Austrian authorities and on the support of local party members, friends and patrons of the movement. As a homeless political refugee, never safe from sudden exposure, far from his father's house, Josef Berchtold had to endure many hardships.
Although his economic existence and his freedom were constantly threatened and any political involvement could only intensify his situation, he never remained inactive, true to his intrepid front-line soldier temperament and his unshakable faith in our final victory. In public meetings and in secret gatherings, he spoke about Adolf Hitler and his ideas. In cities, in villages, in hamlets and in lonely mountain farms, he recruited fighters for the coming Greater Germany, he organized the germ cells of National Socialism, he founded party bases and SA formations. He was tireless in his work. Many an old warhorse of the proud and brave SA and SS of the Salzkammergut, Styria and Carinthia, who later fought

the bitter battle against Dollfuß, Schuschnigg and their ilk to the victorious end, were recruited by Berchtold, inspired by his faith and familiarized with our methods of fighting; thus, obeying Adolf Hitler's far-sighted orders, he was able to do more for Germany and achieve more than if he had been condemned to inactivity and imprisonment along with the rest of us. On the day that Ostmark was incorporated into the Reich, Josef Berchtold's work at that time also reached its ultimate and highest goal.

The second person missing was Hans Schön, the leader of our artillery department. Since he was already the senior owner of a long-established and considerable Munich specialty company, the penal authorities repeatedly granted him a reprieve for business reasons. This was certainly not done out of any sympathy for the "traitor" Hans Schön, but only in view of the unpleasant fact that the imprisonment of a plant manager who was difficult to replace would have meant that a considerable number of the workforce would have lost their jobs. The latter was to be avoided for socio-political reasons. Hans Schön was pleased about this, because he secretly expected an amnesty to be announced soon, which was much talked about. But the amnesty was a long time coming.
The hue and cry of the fat cats and functionaries of the Marxist parties living in Schön's neighborhood, a then-known red Munich district, was not long in coming. They were increasingly annoyed to find that the hated "Nazi Schön" was still at large, even though 1924 had long since passed. The prison authorities could no longer withstand the grumbling of the agitated public. Without further ado, it threw all previously held social concerns overboard and ordered Comrade Schön to appear before the competent senior prosecutor, who, without much ado, gave him an ultimatum to start serving his sentence within 24 hours. "The fortress won't run away from me," Hans Schön reflected with his well-known "calmness of a bombardier", and accordingly only arrived in Landsberg after two 24-hour periods had passed. The senior prosecutor, however, had become suspicious and sent one of his captors to the house of our comrade, who had already left in the meantime. Despite the good-natured persuasion of the landlady, he searched the apartment from cellar to attic, making a lot of noise and rumbling, and searched under all beds and sofas, in all cupboards, chests and boxes for the wanted man, but in vain.
In the first days of April 1925, when Adolf Hitler and all his fellow prisoners, except for the leader of the infantry group of the shock troop, Party member v. Knobloch, had already been released from custody, Hans Schön moved into the part of the building that had been emptied. The administration knew what it owed to the guest who had arrived so late and his economic importance in civilian life, and assigned him as his future quarters Cell No. 7, which had been occupied by Adolf Hitler only a few months before. Thus Hans Schön came to live in the Generals' Wing and won the glory of having became the Führer's successor as a tenant.
In addition to his comrade von Knobloch, a recently delivered "noble anarchist" named Bambi from faraway Rio de Janeiro also provided him with company. This strange and interesting contemporary had been reported by his wicked stepmother as a result of a family dispute, because after the collapse of the Munich Soviet government, he had offered one of its main members shelter and taken him abroad to avoid being seized by the police. Schön tried to convert this convinced communist from communism to National Socialism in laborious but unsuccessful persuasion.[92]
We ourselves had been sorry to have to miss our good comrade Schön during our time in prison. In his original, honest Munich manner, his exemplary camaraderie and his admirable skill at keeping his Bavarian composure no matter how adverse the circumstances, he would certainly have been both a role model and a comfort to us in difficult times.
The then Lieutenant Robert Wagner, who is now Gauleiter and Reich Governor of Baden, brought a welcome change to the prison existence of the last two members of the Stoßtrupp. As a defendant in the great Hitler Trial, he had made a telling remark before the People's Court against the then witness General v. Lossow, which earned him an additional 14 days of imprisonment in a fortress and which he now had to spend in Landsberg.

[92] Couldn't find more info about this "Bambi".

The respective newcomers were immediately introduced to the secrets of fortress life as soon as they arrived. In order to make this initiation and their admission to the "National Socialist Fortress Group of Landsberg am Lech" as ceremonious and impressive as possible for those involved, we invented the "fortress baptism" as a counterpart to the "line-crossing baptism" vividly described to us by Franz Fröschl in his memoirs of his putative whaling days. The outer framework for this was a singspiel that I had written before, of which unfortunately all but the tiniest fragments of the actual "baptismal chorale" have been lost. The surviving original announcement was as follows:

Celebration Program
for the induction ceremony and "fortress baptism" of the honorary prisoners: Friedrich Geißelbrecht, Wilhelm Briemann, Karl Hutter and Erhard Heiden.

"Fortress Baptism"
A singspiel
Words and music by Hans Kallenbach

Characters:
Justitia, the avenging justice, played by H. Kallenbach
Mufti, penal authority, played by H. Fobke
Schinderhannes, hangman, played by F. Fröschl
Emilius, hangman's assistant, played by E. Maurice
Paulus, hangman's assistant, played by P. Hirschberg
The honorable prisoners.

Director: H. Fobke.
Costumes and Set Design: F. Fröschl
Musical Director: Kapellmeister Otto Reichart

The performance begins on Saturday, August 16th, 1924, promptly at 8:30 p.m., to which these unfortunate inmates are hereby duly invited.

The Management:
signed: Fobke
signed: Kallenbach

Justitia, the goddess of justice, was dressed as authentically as possible in an ancient Roman toga consisting of a nightgown that had been cut rather short. Her right eye was bound with a white headband. In her left hand she held a discarded letter scale. In her right hand, the goddess held a broad executioner's sword made of shiny wood as a sign of her dignity. On a small podium, she sat opposite a row of five chairs placed close together. Seated to her left was the deceptively realistic Mufti. Berthold Fischer's long blue coat was decorated with large, round cardboard buttons covered with silver paper, making it resemble the interim skirt of a senior prison officer. Thick epaulettes made of plaited silver paper adorned his shoulders, and a blue peaked cap, also richly decorated with shiny tinfoil, served as headgear. With inimitable dignity and grandeur, Hermann Fobke played the senior government councilor, the master of walls and bars. The house band struck up the melody: "Es geht bei gedämpfter drum Klang." ["The Muffled Drums Now Have Their Say"]. The assembled fortress inmates sang the multi-verse entry song:

"You now come before Justice,
Come closer, for the hour has come,
Where you, in this way,
Will get to know the criminal justice system!"

After the solemn song of sorrow, Schinderhannes now entered the scene of the side-splitting play, his mighty trident thumping on the ground in time. On a long rope, he pulled the “initiates”, who were tied to it at short intervals with their left wrist, flanked on the right and left by the executioners' servants, Emilius and Paulus, the servants, who, poking their charges in the ribs with their handy cudgels, reminded them to keep time. As a sign of his dignity, Schinderhannes wore a pointed conical cap made of red glossy paper with his bright red shirt and was armed not only with a trident, but also with an ellengroßen collapsible wooden knife.[93]
Singing the entrance song, the baptismal candidates, who were intimidated by the light and dressed only in black sports trousers, took a seat on the chairs provided and were artfully tied to them by the executioners. Then the goddess Justitia rose, gave a short welcoming speech, stepped down from her podium and cut each of the new prisoners a mighty blow on the right shoulder with the broad side of her sword. In doing so, she symbolically carried out the act of transferring the newcomers into the custody and care of the Mufti. The Mufti now also stood up and, with an official air, read the following 10 commandments to the astonished listeners:

1. If you are accepted into the fellowship of a cell, always show consideration for your comrades, because consideration is part of decency and decency is part of childhood.
2. Do not throw your cigar, cigarette, or pipe ash on the floor or on the table or in the flower pots. This is neither a mass accommodation nor an inn.
3. Don't hang your clothes on chairs or beds, but in the closet. That's what you have a closet for.
4. Don't smear the tablecloth with dirt. This is not a coachman's tavern.
5. Don't shout pointlessly, but speak properly and don't interrupt your comrades. This is not a Jewish school.
6. If you want to sing along in the chorus or otherwise make a fuss of yourself, go to the common room that is available for this purpose. This is not a concert hall.
7. If you want to wrestle, box or do any other kind of weight training, go out into the hallway. This is not a gym.
8. Be considerate of your fellow comrades and help to ensure that there is general silence in the cell from 12 noon to 2 PM. This is part of the cosiness.
9. From 9 PM onwards, please refrain from any noisy activity and do not disturb your fellow comrades who are writing letters, reading or sleeping. This is part of decency.
10. If you still want to read after 9 o'clock, dim your lights, avoid loud conversation, do not clatter with the typewriter or with wooden slippers through the area, and do not slam doors and windows. You are not in a nightclub.

If you violate these rules, you prove that you only know about camaraderie and decency from hearsay and that you took the fast track through childhood.

After reading this epistle, the Mufti took a handshake and commitment from the deeply shaken candidates and returned to the podium with the goddess.
In the meantime, the servants Emilius and Paulus had dragged two buckets filled with soap suds mixed with soot from the background. With large whitewasher brushes, they began to cover their defenseless charges from top to bottom with a thick layer of foam and stepped aside after the work was done. In the meantime, Schinderhannes had opened his wood knife and noisily sharpened it on an old towel stretched on the wall. He walked solemnly towards the victims, grabbed the nose of the first chosen victim with his left hand and began to scratch and scrape with all his might, until all five victims were clean-shaven. Then he too mounted the podium and on his command of “Man the pumps!”, his servants emptied the buckets,

[93] Was unable to find out what this was, as “ellengroßen” leads to no results.

which had been filled with water in the meantime, with wide-reaching elegant swings from right and left over the frightened and terrified baptismal candidates.

Under the joint final song of the amused spectators,

"The baptism is now complete,
You, the person being baptized, are now one of us,
because you have now
learned about the criminal justice system!"

the baptized were quickly untied by Schinderhannes and his assistants. They disappeared trembling and chattering into their rooms, while the goddess Justitia, accompanied by the laughter of the audience, majestically swept away.
After the unmasking, the old and new members of the National Socialist Fortress Group sat together happily for a while and enjoyed the company of their new comrades, who tried to compensate for the cold of the baptismal water with water cocoa.
Of course, such a cheerful fortress baptism, which Adolf Hitler and his generals also attended with obvious pleasure, could only take place when the air was pure, that is, when our comrades standing guard protected us from unpleasant surprises.

Once again we had reported for labor duty. A large institutional truck, piled high with cobblestones, had rolled into the fortress courtyard. We were to unload the stones and stow them in the large cellar of the fortress building, where they would be protected from the weather. The cellar hatch was directly under the Führer's cell. We formed a long chain from the hatch to the truck and threw the stones to each other.
At the end of the chain, where it went into the cellar, Papa Kriebel had taken up position. Because of the summer heat, he was wearing only a short leather pair of lederhosen on his bare body and his large sombrero-like straw hat on his head. Stone by stone was passed from the car down through the chain from hand to hand and landed with Papa Kriebel, who had to throw it expertly through the hatch to his comrades Rosenwink and Hirschberg standing below. The stones had to be thrown into the cellar with some caution, as a number of massive steam heating pipes ran along the vaulted wall - if a stone accidentally hit the iron, it caused a tremendous noise that echoed through the entire structure, clanging along the pipes and causing even the non-sensitive nerves to crack.
Suddenly, Papa Kriebel, who had somehow lost his concentration, unintentionally threw a stone that fell short and crashed down on the sounding pipes with great force. The pipes thundered out, "Boom, boom", as if heavy bells were beginning to ring. Apparently, the good Oberstleutnant was particularly pleased with the sound of the bells, because the next stone fell short again and set the noisy ringing to work once more. "Boom - boom" - a third stone also landed short.
At that moment, Adolf Hitler stuck his head out from behind the bars and shouted down, visibly annoyed: "Hermann, what is the meaning of this racket? It was all right before without the noise!"
With a smart face, the culprit apologized. The head retreated.
For a while, no stone went wrong. But then suddenly it "boom - boom"ed again with a mighty roar. And again. And a third time.
Adolf Hitler did not show himself this time. Only his right hand cautiously pushed a full washbasin close to the bars and tipped it over with an energetic jerk. The flood of water splashed and poured down on the completely surprised Papa Kriebel and soaked his uncovered, heated upper body. The dripping general shook himself like a poodle emerging from the water. But we were doubled over with laughter.

Prison Psychosis

"In the midst of the blackest night, faith in the coming of a Reich was established."
- **Hermann Göering, March 21st 1933**

It is not the way of a fighter to complain and moan about hard times. The soldier speaks reluctantly of days of tribulation and adversity. Without a word, he endures them and then pushes them aside into oblivion. Wisely, fate wills that gloomy hours lose their dark shadows in later memory and are outshone by the light of happy days, which remain much more firmly in the memory than misery and suffering. Time heals all wounds that life inflicts. And so it has long since healed our wounds, which were burned into our souls. Only shadowy memories remain of the serious and difficult things that we too had to experience. The pen hesitates to report these hours of mental depression and human suffering.

An early fall had come to the country. For days, gray fog shrouded the city and fortress, the fields and meadows, the mountains and valleys, denying us any view of the outdoors. Howling and whining, the west wind blew, shaking doors and windows, whistling over walls and towers and tearing apart the damp blanket of fog. The towering peaks of the Lechtal Alps on the distant horizon were capped with fresh snow. Flocks of hoarse, cawing crows fell into the torn furrows of the fields, heralding the coming of winter. The lush green of the meadows had been blown away, giving way to a pale gray-brown. In the garden, the flowers had faded. Gradually, the leaves on the trees and bushes turned yellow and silently sank to the ground under the gusts of wind. Heavy rain clouds gathered and opened their floodgates. Summer was over. The year 1924 had long since passed its peak. It had become cold, damp, and drafty in the fortress. A gray melancholy, nerve-wracking boredom and a dull weariness of life settled over the minds and hearts of the prisoners.
Storm and rain rushed away, new fog clouds descended. The prison building loomed gray and gloomy into the distance. Deep silence prevailed. All life seemed extinct. A damp haze permeated the fortress and crept up on us. We sat together unhappily. We were freezing, both inside and out. We felt empty. Everything we had to say to each other had already been said. Everything we had to report back home had already been reported. Nothing remained for us but a deep horror, a terrible shudder at the monotony of the never-ending existence of a prisoner. These lead weights seemed to inhibit the passage of the hours. The days would not end and the nights gave us no sleep. Slowly, unspeakably slowly, time crept by.

Then it came towards us, that incomprehensible gray something that had been sitting like an ugly goblin in front of our bars and had stared into our rooms. It darkened our mood. It fell into our minds like a cold hoarfrost, and visibly changed our nature. It undermined camaraderie, paralyzed our resistance, shattered our will to defend ourselves.
Those of us who knew his work from our time as prisoners of war called this thing "prison psychosis." The first symptoms of this creeping illness manifested themselves quite differently in each of our comrades. Some became distraught and disoriented, suddenly unable to perform any kind of physical or mental activity, sitting listlessly and unfriendly in their rooms and falling prey to a gray melancholy. Others lost their appetite. They left their food in disgust and could not be persuaded to eat for days, neither with the kindest nor harshest words.
At one point, even Hermann Fobke even left his burning cigar in the wardrobe in such a state. Only the smoldering edge of his new velour hat warned us in time of the dangerous development of a cell fire. Unused, the books, cards and games lay in the corner. Even visitors from the outside world could no longer please us, as we became indifferent. We became endlessly tired and hopeless, too weak to fight, almost too weak to live. At every turn, the prison psychosis surrounded us, grinned at us from the gray of the flowing fog, crept around outside in the corridors and in the day room, crept into our cells, sat next to us at the table, sat on our beds at night, chuckling maliciously, and robbed us of our sleep.

We avoided each other. We leaned against the window, full of grim determination, shaking the massive iron bars futilely and, finally realizing the futility of our endeavor, we let our hot foreheads sink wearily on the cold sill. Our worries about the future grew enormously, overgrowing our hopeful thinking and shaking us in an inner feverish spasm.
“There you stand, you poor fool,” whispered the demon at the neck of the man afflicted by the disease. ”That's what you get for fighting for Germany. The Fatherland thanks you for sure! – Wasn't that what they used to say? – Now you have your thanks. Haven't you finally had enough of it? Look around you! War, revolution, the Freikorps - your life has been nothing but struggle, struggle for others, and never for yourself! And what have you gained from it? Has Germany become larger, more powerful and more beautiful? No, it has only gone backwards, you and your fatherland!
What was your thanks? Imprisonment! As for your foes? Look around you, you fool! Are they not better off than you and your comrades? Are they not laughing in the face of fortune? Have they not taken advantage of the economic situation and acquired houses and possessions with cheap paper money? Have they not achieved honor and prestige because they remained apolitical and found the time for themselves when you never could?
And what about you? Ideals, you say! Oh, go away with your ideals, they have long since been superseded. Our time no longer needs ideals. Can you even live on ideas that are far removed from the real world? Can you support yourself and your family on vague hopes, on things that are written in the stars?
Turn back, you who have gone astray, think of yourself and your own before it is too late! Germany? It doesn't need you. It doesn't want your help at all, otherwise you wouldn't be locked up here. Don’t you understand? Just look at the cities and cultural centers of the Reich! Are the theaters and entertainment venues not packed to the rafters every day? Isn't the youth of Germany dancing every night in the ballrooms and bars, dancing around their golden calf? Is this the German people that supposedly need your help? You don't even believe that yourself! Do you want to stand apart forever and go through life as an outsider? You are only being laughed at!"
So it murmured and sneered on and on, poisoning the heart and soul of the defenseless. Woe to him who could not shake off the spiteful goblin!

A cold draft woke me. Uneasily, I groped my way through the dark cell. Wasn't there someone standing at the window, shivering from the cold, through whose bars white wafts of mist were drifting into the room?
“For heaven's sake, close the window! It's got you, hasn't it!” came the voice of the cell elder from the corner at the back. The man at the window jumped, mechanically closed the casement and staggered back to the bed next to mine.
“Go to sleep, comrade!” I whispered to him. No answer. Only a deep sigh was audible. Then after a while I heard:
“I can't sleep!”
“Why not?” I whispered questioningly.
“Because I have so much to think about!”
“What are you thinking about?”
“I think about how everything will be when we finally get out of here.”
“And why are you so depressed about it?”
“Because – I don't know – because everything is so difficult and uncertain. Do you think that we will even find each other on the outside, that we can stay afloat until we've made it?”
“But of course. We'll hold out, we'll make it, we even have to make it, says Adolf Hitler. Do you doubt that?”
“No, I don't doubt it exactly, but what if the boss is wrong? What then?”
There it was again, the gray specter. There it sat on the comrade's bed, crept into his restless thoughts, and made him utter words full of anxious doubt.
“One must be able to believe, comrade, to believe without seeing,” I whispered to the doubting man, ‘faith can move mountains, so believe too! Good night, comrade!”

“Thank you! Sleep well!’ came the soft reply.

Again a foggy day had dawned. Harsh words coming from the day room struck our ears. We stepped out of the room and came just in time to separate two quarreling comrades. For some trivial reason, they had gotten into an argument in the middle of a harmless conversation. While speaking, the detention psychosis had attacked them, awakening almost childish sensitivity in them, and causing them to misunderstand each other to such an extent that it had already come to blows.
We managed to calm the angry men. Abruptly, as if startled from an ugly dream, they let go of each other. None of them knew why they had become physical with the other. None of them apologized. None of them said a word of reconciliation. None of them was ashamed of becoming violent against their comrade over a difference of opinion. Without a word, they crept away. Thus the rampant plague had found new victims. Slowly we began to feel horror at the dark power of this incomprehensible, devious disease. There was no help against its treacherous rage.

Alois Rosenwink came in through the door. “Frosch has been lying in the bathtub for hours again, rocking so much that the water is spilling out of the tub on the right and left, seeping through the door and flooding the entire stairwell.”
Frosch, who had started this strange game days ago, had been strictly forbidden to do so by the supervising sergeant after a complaint was made. Nevertheless, he did it again. With pleading and threatening, we brought our comrade back to his senses. He grumbled, disappeared into his room and slammed the door behind him so hard that it echoed. We reported the incident to the general, Dr. Weber.
“For some time now I've had the impression that Fröschl is not himself. He's clearly suffering terribly from prison psychosis. You mustn't leave him alone!” was the general's reply.
Hutter was assigned to keep him company. Steinbinder relieved him. Shortly afterwards the latter came running to us:
“Comrades,” he said, ‘something is wrong with Frosch. I truly believe he's completely insane.”
“Now Michl is seeing ghosts too,’ Fiehler scoffed.
“No, Fiehler,” replied Steinbinder calmly, ‘I don't see ghosts, but Frosch has gone mad, I can tell you that! Take a look at him yourself, if you don't believe me!”
“We'll see about that,’ said Gerum, stepping up and following Steinbinder.
In his room, Frosch sat hunched over playing cards.
“He's been doing this for ten hours without a break and without saying a word,“ Hutter reported, shaking his head.
“Stop this nonsense at last,” Gerum said to the card reader.
“I can't,” he growled without looking up or interrupting his work.
“Why not?“ Gerum asked.
“Because I just can't!” – “So leave me in peace! What I do is none of your business,” Frosch grumbled.
“Be reasonable, comrade, you'll make yourself ill,” Gerum said soothingly.
“It's not going to matter, I'll be here either way,“ came the reply.
“What do you want to know about the cards, Frosch?” the questioner pressed again.
Then he raised his emaciated face, whose morbid pallor and unusual unkemptness revealed more of his state of mind than he was willing to admit. He looked the questioner firmly in the eye and said in turn:
“You, Gerum, what we did on November 8th and 9th and all the time before, that was right, wasn't it?”
“Yes, why do you ask such a stupid question, of course it was right. Everything Adolf Hitler does for Germany is right!”
“And if it was right and just what we did, Gerum, then why are we here? Answer me that!”
“Because the wrong people have the power.”
“Why do the wrong people have the power?”
And so it went on in a question and answer game, for a long time, for hours. Frosch remained unapproachable, stubborn and pigheaded. He could no longer be taught. Shrugging his shoulders, Gerum left him to his own devices.

Someone informed the medicine man of his condition. The medicine man did the rest, carried out a fairly superficial examination and found “nothing”. “Physically healthy, therefore fit to work – (malingerer?)”, was written in the sick book.

Frosch gradually became worse and worse. He began to walk in his sleep. In the dimly lit corridors of the ground floor, he wandered around silently, barefoot, in his nightclothes. Comrades woke up and put him back to bed. But this only helped temporarily. The following nights, he would terrorize the night patrols as an incomprehensible ghost, rattling with some metal objects, moaning and groaning like a seriously ill person.
Every night, the otherwise quiet fortress was filled with new unrest. His behavior became increasingly erratic and strange. He kicked away his cot, hung his shoes high up on the pull lamp, and lay down on the bare floor to sleep. Another time, he would throw the few pieces of furniture in his room around, lock himself in the closet or sit on the ledge high above the floor, and it was difficult to get him to come down from the lofty height. Gradually, new and increasingly serious signs of progressive prison psychosis appeared. We were powerless against it and got used to it. We did the only thing we could do. We never left Frosch alone and constantly monitored him. But this long habit dulled our vigilance too, and so it happened that one night our mentally ill comrade left his cell unnoticed, and soon after, wild roaring woke the frightened sleepers. The night watchmen used force to gently return the crazed, biting and scratching fellow to his room. In the nick of time, the watchmen managed to grab the patient just as he was about to smash the glass of the alarm device in the hallway and set the sophisticated alarm system in noisy motion.
In the early morning hours of the next day, Fröschl was examined again by the medical officer. This time he was finally deemed unfit for detention due to “severe detention psychosis”. A few days after this determination, he left the fortress.
When we saw him again months later after our release, he seemed to have recovered reasonably well at home, in his familiar surroundings and under the careful care of his wife. But he never became the old, honest, down-to-earth Frosch again. His mental state, his inner balance must have received some kind of blow at the fortress that could no longer be healed. He couldn't bear it anymore, and soon after he left Munich, he didn't settle down anywhere. Restless, he drifted from place to place, and so he soon disappeared completely from our field of vision. For many years we have had no news from him or his family. His traces have long since been blown away and no one knows what has become of him or whether he is still alive at all.

The release of our comrade Fröschl did not change the situation of those left behind. We all tried hard to master the grumpy mood in and around us. We resumed our neglected games of entertainment, but we no longer found any pleasure in them. We tried to talk to each other and to cheer each other up as we used to, but we no longer found the right words. We argued over all sorts of trivialities and finally became enemies to ourselves. We could no longer even grumble and mutiny about the fortress regulations. We had reached the end of our tether.

Grumpy and irritable, at odds with God and the world, most of us sat in our rooms, and the others, who had not yet reached this peak of general misanthropy, always gave the “grumpy bears” a wide berth, so as not to arouse their anger by merely appearing.
Adolf Hitler and his generals followed this development of prison psychosis with great concern. For days they sought a remedy and finally, when the need had risen to its highest point, they found a viable solution.
Those afflicted with prison disease were isolated. They were given a change of environment by being relocated. They were moved to a different cell, a different floor, a different wing of the building, into the company of a different fellow inmate. And that helped visibly. Often within 24 hours.
From then on, some comrade or other was almost daily being transferred with their baggage.

The situation was remedied and the detention psychosis lost some of its terror. Soon we were more or less freed from its pressures and breathed a sigh of relief at the feeling of newly awakened resistance.

The Badenweiler March

“When old forms break and the time comes for a spiritual rebirth, then all lies and slander, yes, even all honest and convinced opposition, is in vain. This new form grows and displaces or crushes what stands in its way.”

- **Alfred Rosenberg**

It happened at the end of September 1924. All at once a very strange rumor spread through the ranks of the prisoners. No one knew where it had originated, and yet it was passed from mouth to mouth in no time at all and spread further. Mysteriously exciting and hard to believe, the tale was something that perhaps some visitor from the outside world might have brought with him: The Supreme Court in Munich was supposedly considering reinstating the suspended sentences that had been taken from us. But there was something even more significant that people were whispering to each other about. In the Bavarian Ministry of Justice, serious consideration was allegedly being given to the release of the Führer and his generals from custody as early as October 1924.

The uncontrollable rumor became more and more certain, and its content took on more and more tangible forms. Gradually, we became very agitated. We hardly ate during the day, and hardly slept at night. Our physical needs had become completely secondary; they were almost completely consumed by the bright rays of burgeoning, joyful hope. The knowledge of our imminent freedom filled our hearts and minds and provided us with tireless entertainment. We discussed plans and possibilities over and over again. Time flew by.
One day, a member of the Stoßtrupp, under the seal of deepest secrecy, told us that he had seen the Führer, who believed himself to be unobserved, walking up and down the “Hitler Trail” humming the melody of a cheerful little song to himself, visibly in a good mood. Shortly thereafter, a second comrade rushed into the day room and reported, still trembling with excitement:
“Comrades, the boss is standing at the window in his room and ---”
“Go on!“ we all shouted at once, as if we were speaking with one mouth.
“And he is drumming on the windowpanes, our Führer, and ---”
“For God's sake man, just get it out!” we snapped, as our confessor stuttered with excitement.
“He drums on the windows and – and – and whistles the Badenweiler March!” the messenger finally finished, breathing a sigh of relief and looking at us meaningfully.
At first we were speechless. But then a single outcry of redemptive joy erupted from the depths of our souls. The fact that Adolf Hitler whistled the old attack and victory march of his field regiment was an unmistakable sign of great events to come.

All gloom, all hopelessness and all worries about the future were blown away in one fell swoop. Joy filled our hearts, shone from our eyes, lifted the darkness of the gray autumn day and dispelled the hideous specter of prison psychosis, which had already held us so tightly in its cold, slimy arms.
The next day, we Stoßtruppen received strict orders from the Generals' Wing to launch petitions for the restoration of the probationary period. Now such a flurry of writing began that the pens in our writing-unaccustomed hands began to crunch. Hermann Fobke, as legal advisor and intellectual father of many petitions, was now able to do more useful work than a doctoral dissertation and did so in high demand. He had to tirelessly provide information, formulate requests and invent justifications until finally everything had been processed into a proper petition, neatly put on paper and forwarded to the Mufti.
Days and nights passed, but nothing had been done.
“I think the gentlemen from the court have once again given us the brush-off! Perhaps we need to make more of a ruckus”, comrade Steinbinder said bitterly.
“Don't even think about it, you idiot,” Alois Rosenwink cut him off. ”You'll be able to wait until the gentlemen have had their snack and find time to spell out your scribble.”

In the middle of this friendly conversation, news broke that the probation periods would be reinstated after a full quarter of the sentences had been served.
“The bigwigs at the Palace of Justice could have told us that right away!” Edmund Schneider vented his displeasure. “I can't believe what these guys from the court say to you these days! First you get arrested, then you have to write a petition that makes your head spin, and now you have to learn arithmetic if you want to know when you'll finally get out of there!”
And we really had no choice but to pick up the pencil and do extensive calculations until not only the day and hour, but even the exact minutes were determined. The data determined in this way was written on a piece of paper for each comrade, and the note was hung above the wall by his bed.
However, official confirmation of the restoration of the probationary periods was still missing. As a result, new serious doubts and new disappointments arose. It almost seemed as if the vanished prison psychosis was about to descend on us again.

Then, one day, the tension was finally released. Comrade Haug was ordered to report. When he returned, he seemed to have become a different person. The good news had changed his nature and demeanor rapidly. We besieged him with half a dozen questions at once. As soon as he had gained some peace, he solemnly announced that, according to the official statement of the Mufti, he would be allowed to leave the fortress as a free man after the expiration of the fourth part of his sentence, albeit with a probationary period.
We all rejoiced at the certainty this gave us. But soon a bitter wormwood drop was added to it. Adolf Hitler informed us that the decision on the restoration of his own probationary period and thus also on the detention of his generals until the end of the year had been postponed.

The dark forces that were involved in these delaying tactics are best revealed by the following excerpt from the statement of the Munich Police Headquarters at that time:

“Police Headquarters Munich
IVa No. 2427
Munich, September 22nd, 1924

Confidential!
Report to the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior in Munich

Subject: The conditional pardon of the writer Adolf Hitler, the veterinarian Dr. Friedrich Weber and the retired lieutenant colonel Hermann Kriebel.

In its report dated May 8th, 1924, police headquarters has already expressed its opinion that, based on the temperament and energy with which Hitler pursues his political goals, it can certainly be assumed that he will not give up this goal even after his release from prison, and that he will pose a constant danger to the internal and external security of the state. So far no reasons have been made known that could have induced the Police Directorate to change its former opinion.
If the Police Directorate is of the opinion that Hitler, Kriebel and Dr. Weber should not be released on October 1st, 1924, then the following reasons are decisive:
During the trial, the three defendants repeatedly stated that, once they were released, they would immediately devote themselves to the National Socialist movement again and continue to work in the same spirit as before. Hitler, Kriebel and Dr. Weber are still the leaders of dissolved combat units and the spiritual leaders of their camouflaged substitute formations; therefore, a release of the three named persons with a probationary period can hardly be considered. If, contrary to expectations, the court grants a probationary period, it is essential, for the reasons stated, to identify Hitler as the soul of the entire national movement in order to avert the immediate danger to the Bavarian state. In this regard, I

refer to my report of May 8th, 1924, in which I requested Hitler's expulsion from Bavaria, giving detailed reasons.
His influence is responsible for the numerous acts of violence committed by his followers, including the putsch. His energy will make him the driving force behind further significant disturbances of the peace as soon as he is released, and he will pose a permanent threat to the security of the state. Hitler will resume his political activities and the hopes of the nationalists that he would succeed in eliminating the current discord and the disputes between leaders within the combat units will be fulfilled. Hitler's influence over all the followers of his ideas, for he is now more than ever the soul of the whole movement, will again push the whole movement forward and will attract great masses of people who have not yet joined, which will lead them to the NSDAP. In order to achieve this, he will naturally give a tremendous impetus to his organizational activities, hold demonstrations as he did before the putsch, and riots such as those that are still vividly remembered can certainly be expected. Hitler will also resume the ruthless fight with the government and will not shy away from violating the law, even if he is expecting to be dismissed from the probationary period. In this, it makes no difference whether, as reported, he will take up residence in Berlin or in Mecklenburg after his release, or whether he will remain in Munich itself. Kriebel will undoubtedly reorganize and revitalize the Kampfbund, and Dr. Weber the "Oberland" Freikorps."

The long-winded report concludes with the statement that the Police Headquarters, in view of the peace and order and the sacred security of the state, cannot under any circumstances be held responsible for the fact that Adolf Hitler, Hermann Kriebel and Dr. Friedrich Weber were supposed to be released from custody on October 1st, 1924.
The Supreme Court, loyal to the system, naturally had nothing more urgent to do than to withdraw the probation period proposed for October 1st, 1924, on the basis of these statements, and to postpone a new decision for an indefinite period in genuine civic fear of the responsibility.
Thus our beautiful dream of being able to march out into freedom with Adolf Hitler at the head of us had vanished into thin air. It had to wait until December 20th, 1924 before the gates of the fortress finally opened to him, and it was a few days after Christmas before his generals were also finally let out.

Freedom is Approaching

“Sorrow comes,
Joy passes,
Joy comes,
Sorrow passes –
The days are never the same.”

- **Theodor Storm**

Time seemed to stand still after the Mufti officially announced the release date of each individual prisoner. The days passed endlessly and slowly, and the nights seemed to last forever. We were seized by a powerful desire for freedom.
Impatience was wearing on our nerves.
We stood and walked around in vain, talked meaningless words to ourselves and started packing all over again. Things that were not suitable to be inherited by our comrades remaining in custody were tied into packages and sent home. Then we polished the trunks, which had become unsightly during the course of the detention, put all our belongings into them and placed them under the beds, ready for our hands.
Once all the travel preparations had been made, we once again sat around idly and impatiently, daydreaming and imagining for the umpteenth time the day of our homecoming, the reception by our relatives, the greeting of friends and comrades. Again and again we saw the great fortress gate creak open in our minds, and as soon as we had stepped out into the cool autumn day, closing behind us with a dull echo.

Finally, the day of my farewell had come. The next morning, at 9:30 AM, I was to be released. At the same hour, 30 minutes earlier, comrade Gerum would also be leaving. This time difference between us had been carefully considered and laid down as a precaution, because the release of two traitors at once would, in the opinion of the penal authorities, inevitably have put the continued existence of the entire republic in grave danger.
Now it was time to say goodbye to the fortress and its garrison, to the Führer, to the generals and to the soldiers. Only now, as I said goodbye to my comrades, did I realize how difficult it was for me to leave their familiar circle. During the long months of living in close quarters together, we had become a devoted troop, sworn to each other in life and death. Many invisible bonds of shared adversity and deprivation, of shared lansquenetry and shared hours of happy camaraderie held us together, chained us to each other. All of us, without exception, faced a dark and uncertain future when we parted and stepped out into life.
Adolf Hitler's Stoßtrupp, to which we had belonged body and soul, had been crushed, dissolved and banned. Would they ever be revived?
The remnants of the camouflaged party, which continued to vegetate, faced a similar fate and waited longingly for the strong hand of their Führer. When would he be able to follow us and call on us to fight anew?

With such thoughts in my mind I had said farewell to my generals and to my comrades on the evening before my release. The next day at nine o'clock I reported for my last visit with Adolf Hitler. Alone, I stood before him in his room. Words of devotion and of thanks came to my lips. Bitter pain at our separation permeated the minutes of my last meeting with the Führer, whom, during the many months of my imprisonment, I had not only come to revere as a unique, towering, and mighty personality, but also to love with all my heart as a human being and comrade.
Adolf Hitler gave me recognition, courage and hope for the road ahead. His warm wishes for my future, my continued progress and the unshakable certainty of an early reunion in freedom accompanied me on my journey into the unknown. One last glance of the bare, sober room where the man lived solidified my desire to follow the Führer. With an overflowing heart I grasped Adolf Hitler's hand firmly and inwardly

renewed the silent oath of unconditional devotion and readiness for any future to come. I was then released.

Following the preceding sergeant on duty, I walked for the last time through the echoing corridors between the iron lattice doors towards the offices of the prison administration.
I entered the room of the Mufti, who was waiting for me at his desk, fully dressed in his official attire. With his usual dignity and composure, he handed me my papers and a certificate stating that, having served the prescribed part of my sentence, I was released from prison as of today. The Mufti added a few well-meant admonitions and fatherly suggestions to this mercenary and traitor, to finally discard these delusions and to act as a brave and obedient citizen in the future.
Then he cleared his throat and continued:
“On the basis of the reports available to me, I must acknowledge that you, Lieutenant, have conducted yourself properly during your stay here and have given no cause for significant complaints or grievances. Nevertheless, I would like to ask you to promise me now to leave Landsberg on the next train.”
“Allow me to make a comment, Mr. Senior Government Councilor,” I replied in astonishment at his completely unreasonable request, ”as far as I know, your authority over me ends at the fortress gate. I am therefore surprised that you are making a demand on me that clearly goes beyond your jurisdiction.”
“Well,” the Mufti, somewhat cornered, replied, ”what you say is, of course, quite correct, but let me briefly explain the reason for my request. You are to give me the promise to leave immediately, not in my capacity as the official director of the prison, but, if I may express myself in this way, as a private individual well-disposed towards you.”
This speech, dictated more or less by a certain embarrassment to the Mufti, delighted me to no end and aroused my keen curiosity.
“Yes, but I don't understand, Mr. Senior Government Councillor,” I continued.
“You will be enlightened in a moment,” he interrupted me. "You are aware that several of your comrades besides Mr. Haug have already been released before you?”
I nodded in agreement.
“Well, it is precisely your comrades who were released earlier that are to blame for the condition I would like to impose on you today,’ my counterpart continued, “because just imagine, on the day of their return to freedom, the released prisoners had a whole number of friends and like-minded people visiting them in Landsberg, and with them they then organized a reunion, of all places, in the very restaurant where we officials of the prison administration have our meetings.”
“That was surely their right,” I interjected.
“Of course it was!” the Mufti continued, “of course it was! In general, one has nothing against it, but it didn't stop with their harmless celebration. When your comrades had warmed up a bit – by the way, there were quite a number of Landsberg citizens who are supporters of your party in this extremely excited company, whom I know personally – they presumed to parody me and my officials in front of the assembled audience, caricaturing us and calling me 'Obermufti' or something similar. To top it off, they threatened us all with occasional payback. I would like to make it perfectly clear that this is absolutely unacceptable and that, as the representative of the penal system and head of the prison, I will not tolerate it under any circumstances!”
This daring deed by my comrades gave me great pleasure and prompted my counter-question:
“Oh, so that's it, Mr. Senior Government Councillor. You are now afraid that the rest of us will act similarly to those released before us. That cannot be completely dismissed,” I continued, in order to keep the Mufti in his anxious fears, ”and that is why I unfortunately cannot give you the requested promise.”
“I might have guessed,” the senior government official admitted, shaking his head, ”that it is impossible to have a reasonable word with fanatics like you. It seems as if a new era is dawning, and with it new people, who cannot be reached with either prohibitions or reasoned arguments!”
“I will take that as a parting word and a good omen for the future, Director,” I replied promptly. ”Heil Hitler!”

The Mufti rose, taken aback. A curt bow on his part, a hook-like folding on mine, and then the conversation was over.

A few minutes later, the event occurred that I had been picturing over and over again in my mind's eye in recent times. The heavy fortress gate opened creakily in front of me, I stepped over its threshold and stood beyond walls and bars. The gate slammed shut behind me with a dull echo.
Comrade Gerum was waiting for me down by the bridge that spans the wild and foaming Lech in a wide arc. Whistling the Hohenfriedberg march, we rode into the little town together.
We stopped at the friendly inn “Zum Goggel” and got used to the long-missed pleasures of freedom with an extensive breakfast of white sausages and a glass of foaming beer. Then we strutted out of the station and soon the little train was carrying us, panting and puffing, back to Munich.

On the distant horizon of the beautiful late autumn day, the gray, elongated buildings and the high bare walls of the fortress prison of Landsberg am Lech sank, and with them sank a chapter of our existence, which, though full of hardship, suffering and deprivation, will always be the most beautiful of our lives. Before we went our separate ways after our arrival in Munich, we pledged ourselves anew to Adolf Hitler and to his tireless struggle for Germany's resurrection, which, no matter what it might bring for us as individuals, must not stop until victory was won or death took us, because we too were among the nameless SA. men who spoke, in the words of a poet:

“We break the chains, we make ourselves free!
We raise our arms to the Führer.
We are the soldiers of the coming age;
we are ready, like the dead of Flanders,
for the last fanfare of alarm.”

Appendix

“It is not the number that counts, but the will!”
- **Adolf Hitler, September 5th 1923**

Christmas Eve 1924, Within Landsberg Fortress:
An excerpt from a letter to the author from Bonn on the Rhine, dated January 25th, 1925

The austere, forbidding walls and towers of the prison fortress of Landsberg am Lech rose up into the dark, fog-shrouded evening sky on December 24th, 1924. Three days earlier, the so-called “probationary period” had finally been granted to the Führer, albeit with all kinds of restrictions. It was with heavy hearts and aching feelings of loss that we saw Adolf Hitler go. Those of us who remained were depressed not by the further deprivation of our freedom and the prospect of a further bleak and purposeless life behind walls and bars, but by the awareness that the Führer, our fatherly friend and advisor and at the same time our most loyal comrade in good and bad days, had left.
In his place, Dr. Friedrich Weber had taken over the care and supervision of the community of “high traitors” of November 9, 1923.

That was the situation on Christmas Eve 1924. We fortress prisoners were gathered in the day room. In one corner, which was otherwise so gloomy in the evening, the Christmas tree shone brightly, which what we had finally wrested from the prison administration after much struggle. The sounds of familiar and yet always new Christmas songs quietly resounded from the violin of one of our comrades. First one sang - still timidly - then the second joined in, and finally we all sang the old songs. Then silence, only the lights of the tree crackling here and there.
Dr. Friedrich Weber then spoke to us. All that he said to us in that hour, all that he brought us in songs and kindness, will remain unforgettable to us and will speak to us again and again when, in later years, we stand under a Christmas tree, wherever we may be. All the love and affection that Dr. Weber wanted to give to his family and loved ones that day, he gave to us in comradeship and loyalty.
We commemorated Adolf Hitler in Munich, we commemorated our loved ones at home. In that hour we understood the meaning and content of the Stoßtrupp camaraderie that bound us to the Führer and our comrades throughout Germany in the cramped, gloomy fortress.

Then the blankets covering the tables around the Christmas tree were removed. We had all been given rich gifts from our loved ones at home, but also from unknown and unnamed party members and friends throughout the country. Wishes that we had been able to entrust to Dr. Weber weeks before had been fulfilled.
In a fit of human understanding, the fortress administration had exceptionally allowed the fortress inmates to stay up later that evening. The amount of alcohol prescribed by the house rules, 1/2 liter of beer per man or a bottle of wine for 4 men, had also been increased for this evening. In addition, there were bottles of various drinkable contents that had been saved for weeks, which had secretly found their way to us through all kinds of roundabout and secret routes.
That evening, we sat together with our comrades for a long time, singing, joking and laughing. But now and then one or the other of our number would quietly step up to one of the high barred windows and look longingly over there, where, on the other side of the gray wall, the near and yet so distant world of freedom lay silent and festive. Many a thought rushed home on this holy night and many a thought came back to us from there.
Slowly the Christmas lights went out, and then the Christmas Eve of 1924 was over.

That night, we all lay awake for a long time. Many a question was asked inwardly, asking the big “why?” But we were also overcome by a great understanding of this question, just as it may have come over our

comrades who remained at the Feldherrnhalle more than a year ago, and which they surely still understood in their death throes, why they had to die for Germany's resurrection.

On Boxing Day, the fortress garrison, which had otherwise been so loud and rough, but was now serious and silent, was barely recognizable. It was only when a late Christmas present in the form of a gramophone arrived at the cell of one of our comrades around noon that the old tone gradually returned. The gramophone, with its tunes, made us feel light-hearted and cheerful again. Our combined efforts also succeeded in extinguishing the light of this technical marvel after about two hours of delightful enjoyment. Our quite understandable grief at this misfortune was overcome, however, by the promising fact that the occupants of the largest cell in the fortress – you still know it, it is your old place, No. 11 – had invited the entire household to a “Christmas supper” that evening. Many preparations had to be made. One could see someone busily peeling potatoes while another was busy cracking open lard to add to a large pot along with all kinds of strange and undefinable-looking ingredients. A third was incessantly stirring a yellowish mass that, according to him, was supposed to become the “mayonnaise” for the potato salad. So everyone had their useful occupation, and when the hour of dinner arrived, the holiday delights of the institution's kitchen were proudly spurned in favor of the products of their own cooking.
First, there was a cocoa that had turned out too thick for certain reasons, with the spoons getting stuck in it - it had been prepared according to the secret recipe of a member of the Stoßtrupp, who had once been an employee of a chocolate factory in his civilian life, and had personally made it with his own hands - with his skills, even the hungriest of us were satisfied.
Then there was potato salad made from potatoes that had not quite softened, with the aforementioned mayonnaise. Each man was given a small piece of cold boiled chicken on the side. Finally, an excellent fruit salad was served, along with a wide variety of pastries, chocolates and sweets. The main thing was to keep the right order in the confusion of unfamiliar delights. All of a sudden, and in a way that has not yet been explained, a bottle of fiery Malaga had also found its way through the sevenfold wire mesh of the administrative bureaucracy of the detention center that you are so familiar with, to this banquet. She was immediately beheaded and had to give each of the assembled a thimbleful of her precious contents.

The following day, a special surprise was in store for us, and with it the best Christmas present of all. During our usual morning walk in the fortress garden, we suddenly saw – we couldn't believe our eyes – a man standing at the entrance to the courtyard, dressed in a gray-white raincoat that looked strangely familiar to us. As if on command, we stood still and rigid – and then came a single outcry: “Adolf Hitler! – Our Führer!”
Yes, it was Adolf Hitler! The original efforts undertaken immediately after his arrival in Munich to see those of us left behind during Christmastime had failed due to the resistance of the Bavarian state government. That was why he left Munich very early on Boxing Day, the 26th of December, to surprise us in Landsberg am Lech. All of our hands reached out to him at the same time. We were so happy that we hardly knew what to say. We just squeezed his right hand tightly and looked gratefully into his eyes. Adolf Hitler slowly walked through our ranks. He returned every handshake. He had a friendly, kind and encouraging word for each of us. He then he spoke of his intention to not rest until we, his followers, too, could laugh again in freedom, and then continue to sacrifice and fight until the Germany had emerged for which our comrades at the Feldherrnhalle had bled and fallen, so that we survivors, together with the entire German people, could once again truly live in a united and free German fatherland.

That was Christmas 1924 in Landsberg Fortress!

Heil Hitler!

Your comrade, Hans Eduard Krüger,
Defendant No. 25

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"Heldendank" [Thanksgiving]

They went into the field, wreathed with flowers.
How the old songs lament!
One Germany was against the whole world,
and the whole world could not bring it down.

For four years we held out gloriously
and would have held out even longer,
until the torch of discord flew into the house,
ignited by treacherous forces.

And they went homeward, wounded and torn,
their able limbs shot to pieces,
and found their homeland torn apart, incited,
for whom they had shed their blood.

They returned home – not adorned with flowers
no, adorned with bloody bandages,
and many a tear was angrily crushed
in a silent reunion.

No song and no thanks, the army broken,
The courage and hope was gone.
Oh, so many were now silent
who once set out singing.

Oh, you, my German fatherland,
betrayed, sold and forgotten,
do not forget the heroes in field-gray garb
and what they did for you.

Do not forget the faithful dead.
They died the death of the free,
and demand from us as a debt of gratitude
that we take care of their heritage.

That shall be the gratitude of the living
an outstanding mark in the country,
The dead remind day in and day out:

Remember the German shame!

And where a German grave was created,
be it in France, in Russia, in Poland,
there lies your loyalty, you German land.
When will you retrieve it?

F.W. Hausmann

Our Dead

Do you remember what happened ten years ago? For days and nights the trains rolled to the west and to the east. They carried the most sacred of German goods – German men, marching towards the enemy. Flags fluttered around them, songs were sung. And tears followed them...
But they did not heed the tears. Laughing, they threw themselves towards death, fastened victory to the bullet-torn banners. It was as if, in the storm that swept over the battlefields, Germany was to fulfill its mission in the world.

Un-German rags have destroyed this mission and disgraced the sacrificial death of two million German soldiers who died in this belief, in this mission of their people.

The silent heroes of the World War are the champions of the National Socialist movement. We nationalists also want what they wanted: the freedom and greatness of our nation. That is why the dead German soldiers are sacred to us.

The fight in which they fell is not yet over. We, the Volk, continue to fight it. Many more souls have been laid to rest in the fatherland, accompanying the lonely hills of distant battlefields all over the world - there slumber those who helped to fulfill the legacy of their dead comrades. Those who were killed by a German bullet, the dead of Munich, also belong to the silent gray army that prepared the way for us.
We want to finish the construction that they began with blood and iron, the construction of a free, national Germany.

That, shall be our homage to heroes.

–FB–

Mobilization of the 2nd Company of the Royal Infantry Regiment “Prince Wilhelm of Hohenzollern” in Zweibrücken (Palatinate)

Once again, the vacation of the plagued company commander did not materialize. Instead of recovering in the Black Forest, he had to go on a fortress general staff trip to Königsberg in Prussia. It was supposed to be a dress rehearsal for a fortress recruitment ceremony.

On June 23rd, 1914, I spent a day in Berlin on my way to the east. At 5 o'clock in the evening, an extra sheet was read out with loud shouting, as was usual up there: the Archduke-heir to the throne of Austria had fallen victim to an assassination attempt by Serbian conspirators in Sarajevo.
I knew: That was the signal! A premonition of things to come prompted me to write a short letter to my sergeant, instructing him to go over everything again that we had to carry out immediately on the western

border of the empire, since it was possible that I would not be able to return to Zweibrücken in time. I then continued by night express train.
We followed the July events with increasing tension. Would it come to war this time, or would it not come to war again? That was the refrain of our conversations and thoughts. It had to come, this war, in which we would have to fight for victory or destruction. King Edward's wheat was in full bloom.

On July 24th, I returned to my garrison. Quickly, the mobilization calendars came out. The names were entered everywhere for transfers to the reserve, land defense, and replacement formations. A preliminary exercise of the railway protection was commanded, to which my company had to transfer 1 officer, 7 non-commissioned officers, and 42 men. Each of them had all of their equipment hanging in a tent. Two hours after the order was received, they had to be ready for departure in full field gear. Everything went well. It was with a heavy heart that I selected the sergeants, chamber sergeants and platoon leaders from my best non-commissioned officers, as well as good enlisted men to form the core of the new formations to be set up. Every man knew where he belonged.
At noon on July 30th, I handed the calendars over to my sergeant. He was able to take it from there. At 9 o'clock that evening, the order “Imminent Danger of War” arrived, and the railways were immediately suspended. I went to the barracks feeling reassured that everything had gone to plan. I addressed a few words to my brave men, who were wild with enthusiasm. My Palatines knew what was at stake - for two years I had taught them about the danger our country was in, and they had no doubt that it was a matter of life or death for Germany.

We had certainly taken into account the moral strength of our German soldiers in the war on two fronts. But we had not known that the German fighters had such superiority over all their enemies. If this had been ascertainable beforehand, the superior Russian forces would not have constantly weighed like a nightmare on all the measures of the Supreme Army Command.

The first day of mobilization arrived. Everything went like clockwork. The reservists arrived, many familiar faces from my year, which had been discharged in 1913. Clothing, weapons, equipment, horses, vehicles and the popular field kitchen, everything was in order and went as it was written in my mobilization calendar. I no longer had to worry about much. Every evening I gathered my company, greeted the new arrivals, and instilled a unified mood, so that the spirit of the company soon permeated all of them. On the third day of mobilization, our firing squad returned. One of my companies had a Russian car that did not stop when called upon, and was brought to a halt by a shot in the engine. How proud that sharpshooter was!

The town of Zweibrücken was in a strangely subdued, joyful mood. It was more solemn than jubilant. People still remembered so much from the stories of their parents and grandparents about the atrocities of the French in that city. There was probably a premonition of all the hardships that were yet to come upon the inhabitants. It was different there than other cities in the Reich. Our regiment was celebrated, since almost all the sons of the city served in it. But despite all the warmth, an undertone of concern resonated through all the cheering and talking. Will we pass the “great test”? How many of you young, fresh soldiers will not return?

On the evening of the 5th day of mobilization, the company was ready. On the 6th, the battalion was in the barracks courtyard at 7 AM. I greeted my company with a few words, and a joyful “Good morning, Captain” was echoed in response. I could rely on my people. The color guard company arrived with music. The color guard entered the third company. The old Bavarian soldier's prayer rang out, which we had heard so often in the bivouac during maneuvers. Today was the day of reckoning.
We marched to the train station. The crowd stood with their heads uncovered as we marched past them. The flags were waving from the houses, many a girl waved to her sweetheart in farewell, and here and

there an acquaintance gave a warm greeting. But would we pass the “great test”? That was the silent question that looked at us from everywhere.

The loading went smoothly. My sergeant and my officers knew their duty. My loyal lieutenant Krieger, who had been my recruit officer for two years, had been retained by me. His unfailing humor and his originality made him a dear comrade to me. He fell at Wytschaete with many of my brave men. My other lieutenants were all capable reserve officers, my non-commissioned officers were loyal and brave, full of daring and iron willpower, and they took great care of their men! And now, for the first time, none of the peace discipline was abandoned. The train journey led us to the Lorraine border guard. After a long march in scorching heat, we arrived at our quarters. Not one man undressed; that was not done in the 2nd Company, and with true malicious glee, we noted how many from other companies were entrenced in the ditches by the side of the road.
The first days passed with exercises, because as far as I knew the Schlieffen plan, we would soon be in the middle of great events. How right I was! On August 19th, we were forward at Mörchingen, across the road to Chateau-Salins, in a makeshift trench. The French were slowly advancing, and with the first grenade that hit next to my company, without injuring anyone, the seriousness took hold.

It is only a rough sketch that I have thrown down. But it too shall be a small monument that I erect to the brave soldiers of my company. Few have survived the war uninjured. In one of the proudest divisions of the Bavarian army, the 11th Infantry Division, the regiment and thus my company were able to experience its richest history, which even the Royal Bavarian Life Guards did not achieve on the same from the fall of 1914. In terms of losses of officers and men, my regiment is among the first.
Today, I remember my dear comrades with sadness, but also with pride for what they have achieved. It is a difficult fate that they now have to endure in the Palatinate and the Saar region, and for me personally, because I cannot visit those who survived.
So these lines are dedicated to them in memory of those great times, the survivors and the dead. When I think back to them and those times 10 years ago, I feel, with our great poet:

“You bring with you the images of happy days,
and dear shadows arise.
Like an old, half-forgotten saga,
first love and friendship come up with you.

The pain becomes new, it repeats the lament
of life's labyrinthine course,
and names the good ones who, deceived by happiness,
vanished from my sight in those beautiful hours.”

Hermann Kriebel

The Royal Parade in Lille

After the offensive battles at La Bassé in April 1918, the 6th Storm Battalion returned in peace to the area around Lille.
One day, the battalion received orders: the next day, His Majesty King Ludwig would inspect the battalion.
The usual preparations were made early that morning. Then there was a march to the Lille Station Square, after which the battalion, including the infantry Gun Battery 8, was painstakingly lined up.

Then a long wait! An hour, an hour and a half – then the train that brings King Ludwig to the front finally arrives at the main station. Commands resound, the presentation march sounds, and in the background the familiar accordion trousers emerge from the tangle of "wax-seal legs"[94]

King Ludwig first goes to the group that is lined up to receive the awards on the right wing of the battalion. It is now the turn of Lieutenant Thomann from my battery to receive the Bavarian Military Service Cross from the hands of His Majesty. His Majesty asks: “Well, what do you do?” “I am an artillery liaison officer,” is the prompt reply. “Well, you must travel a lot then?”, King Ludwig inquires. Thomann denies this, whereupon the king says: “Then you must ride a lot then!” Thomann now briefly tries to explain to His Majesty what the work of an artillery liaison officer involves. However, King Ludwig only listens to this for a short time and turns with greetings to the next person. In his understandable daze, he now also confuses the awards to be distributed, presenting our gunner Götz with the Military Merit Cross with Crown intended for a non-commissioned officer, while he awarded the non-commissioned officer the Cross without the Crown.

This little experience, as funny as it may seem, has done a lot to help us all remember the last parade in front of our king.

Social Equalization, or, Recruit and Lieutenant

I was a recruit, and therefore happy. I had already learned how to salute, and so I was soon able to show off my beautiful extra uniform[95], which had been hanging in the closet since the third day of my time as a soldier. I was even able to live in my parents' house because the pioneer barracks were overcrowded. The extra uniform was always moved around a lot in the evenings, and I always came to work very sleepy in the mornings. One day, after work, I had to pay a congratulatory visit to a friend of my sister's who had become engaged. I enter the room and the next moment I stand at attention, because the groom was a real lieutenant, and what's more, he had his own black weapon[96]. I stammer out my congratulations and am, of course, invited to attend. The revelry soon reaches fever pitch. Naturally, I had no leave. But the lieutenant promised to escort me home safely and to protect me from any patrols.

Around midnight, the lieutenant and the recruit are already drinking, and at dawn they sway home arm in arm in harmony. I just have time to throw on my service uniform.

Yawning, sleepy, green around the gills, I report to the company's left wing. Suddenly: “Stand still, eyes right!” The lieutenant is coming. He has just been assigned to the company and is pacing the front to get to know his guys. I open my eyes wide and stare at him. He, too, looks quite the worse for wear. When he gets to me, he stops short – we grin. It was my new buddy from the previous evening. I didn't do much duty that day.

H.P.

[94] A colloquial term for high-ranking officers - English equivalent would be calling them “brass-heads”.
[95] A uniform meant for specific purposes beyond that of field or parade attire.
[96] I believe this is in reference to a Luger P08, which German officers usually carried.

My Mobilization

Metz – July 31st, 1914. A state of war has been declared on the fortress. The gymnasium is closing its doors, and the German-feeling[97] part of the first class is marching to the district command.
Among them is my friend and neighbor Robert Frantz. We have been gripped by war volunteer fever. After much back and forth, we are both found to be suitable for light cavalry or train. We choose cavalry; train is too ordinary for us, because we know the saying: "Victory or death, we carry bread!"[98]

With the fitness test done and the order to report to Diedenhofen the next day with written parental consent for transport to the Hussar Regiment there, we hurry home. At home, great excitement! A family council! The old lady weeps, grandmother threatens to disinherit me, and the old gentleman decides: crazy idea, impossible, much too young. I race, rage, weep, swear - it's all in vain!
Then I went to my friend Robert to complain to him. At his house, exactly the same thing happens, only accompanied by a few fatherly slaps in the face.
Deepest indignation. We deliberate! Hurray, we have come up with a plan. But it requires money. Robert has an idea and, under the seal of the deepest secrecy, borrows a full 20 marks from the parental kitchen fairy[99]. The next morning, we disappear from home very early, saying that we want to see the warlike operations in town. Armed with a tattoo brush and a few well-hidden little items, we meet at the train station. And just like that, we are whizzing towards Diedenhofen on the express train. A former maid from Robert's parents' house is married to a railroad worker there. The couple is initiated into our secret and at the same evening, we are already cheerful recruits in the barracks of the Royal Prussian Hussar Regiment King Umberto of Italy, No. 13. They took us without a declaration of consent. We just thought we had won the game.

Three days later, we were being initiated into the secrets of grooming horses in the stables. Suddenly, the non-commissioned officer on duty appears and shouts through the premises: "War volunteers Kallenbach and Frantz, to the captain immediately!" Unsuspecting, we trot to the squadron office. As Robert Frantz throws open the door and stands at attention, I am seized by a great horror and the whole misery of humanity falls upon me. I recognized the infantry captain standing next to the cavalry captain as my old father. Oh, good heavens, now help us. The end result: We trudge as simple civilians with an awful guilty conscience next to the old gentleman to the train station, and an hour later we are back home. Everything had been in vain! At least that's how it seemed to us. A three-day lecture, along with all the accompanying symptoms. For three days I played the deadbeat, refused all food, and had suicidal thoughts. Finally, the ice was broken and my old man told me that, according to the facts of the case, I could not be held to it anyway, and so my wish to become an officer should come true. But according to tradition, I was to join a rifle battalion, and I was very happy when, eight days later, I landed as a Fahnenjunker at the Rhenish Rifle Battalion 8 in Schlettstadt in Alsace. My friend Robert, who unfortunately remains in the Argonne, also got his way and joined the Metz Engineers.

It was only much later that my father told me that if it hadn't been for our escape, our parents would not have let us join up so quickly, and so I am still happy today that we came up with this adventurous idea back then.

H.K.

[97] "Deutschfühlende", a nationalist term.
[98] Colloquial phrase.
[99] Colloquial phrase for a female chef.

An Assault on Snowshoes

In the winter of 1914/15, the French held positions in the Vosges near Munster, to the west of the small town, dominating the Fechtel Valley and thus forming a constant threat to Colmar and even to Alsace. On February 19th, 1915, the 8th Bavarian Reserve Division under Lieutenant General von Stein, the current Chief of Staff of the German Army, and former First Lieutenant Kriebel, attacked across a broad front. In bloody fighting that only finally came to an end in mid-March, they succeeded in wrestling the positions above the Fechtel from the enemy despite the harsh, snowy Vosges winter and its excellent security and fortifications, and in liberating Colmar and the Rhine valley from the pressure of a French incursion.

The division's left flank, west of Sondernach, was secured by parts of the first Bavarian Snowshoe Battalion, which was engaged in reconnaissance at the western foothills of the Hilsenfirst on February 19th-20th. When the news arrived during the night of February 20th-21st that some French Alpine troops had broken through and were advancing on Linthal and Sondernach, the 3rd Company and a platoon of the 1st Company of the battalion were prepared to attack Linthal early on the morning of February 21st. At around 7 o'clock in the morning, approximately 120 men on snowshoes had reached the edge of the basin unnoticed through the deeply snow-covered, untouched mountain forest, at the bottom of which, shrouded in fog, lay the poor village of Vogesen. Enquiries revealed that the enemy had not yet left their quarters and had only secured Nordoften on the road to Sondernach.
About 500 meters of open steep slope lay between the edge of the forest and the huts of the village, with an altitude difference of about 150 meters. While the two machine guns were set up at the village exits, the company itself was set in 2 waves with 30-second intervals for the surprise attack on Linthal. In windbreakers and windpants, worn inside out in white, it was shortly before 8 o'clock, still in light fog, in a silent, whizzing schuss[100] through the high spraying snow spray down the steep slope and into the still sleepy village. By the time the skis were unbuckled and the carabiners removed from the backs, the second wave had already arrived, and with loud cheers the company entered the village. The completely surprised enemy, who was having breakfast, offered little resistance. Apart from a few dead, they left behind 65 wounded and unwounded prisoners, including 1 company commander, 2 heavy machine guns, and other equipment. Although the fog helped him to escape, the surprise attack, especially since Sengern was retaken at noon (by Reserve Jäger Battalion 8), eliminated the danger of the enemy breaking into the flank and rear of the left wing of the 8th Bavarian Reserve Division, which was engaged in fierce attacking battles. We had victoriously carried out the only assault by German troops on snowshoes in the World War, with the small loss of two lightly wounded.

Dr. Weber

Greetings to the Vosges

Greetings to you, my green firs,
Dear familiar Wasgenwald[101],
Long gone are the days,
When you were surrounded by the roar of war.
How often have I lain on your heights,
Surrounded by the battle day and night,
How often have I looked down into the valley
And seen the blooming splendor of my homeland.
In the Münstertal, on the Hilsenfirst,

[100] A downhill run on skis.
[101] German term for the Vosges mountains, used when Alsace and parts of Lorraine belonged to Germany.

And there on Hartmannsweilers Höh'n
Many a comrade remained,
Whom they did not see home again.
Now the fight has ended, died away,
Gone is the great world event,
The forest has been destroyed, shattered,
And the storms blow through it, lamenting.
And I look from the Feldberg
And greet you from afar,
Then I swear to the dead
Alsace shall become German again.

H.K.

What Did I Step In?

A dense forest - we are on the front line. Dark night envelops everything in impenetrable blackness. I rush, suspecting nothing good, with the usual evening report to the rear to the KTK[102]. It is quiet as a mouse all around me - only now and then the bang of a rifle shot or that of a flare rocket sounds in my ear. There – suddenly distant shots in rapid succession. Howling and whistling, these strange birds come flying, crashing and splintering; the French greetings fall all around me. The air has become uncomfortably iron-rich. Sap, wood chips and shrapnel whiz through the terrain. Quick cover is my only thought. I run for my life, bumping into trees and roots, falling and getting up again, and death is getting closer and closer. Finally, I see a part of the trench. With a sigh of relief, I jumped in hastily. But what is this? I'm as shocked as if I'd been bitten by a tarantula! I had thrown myself into a foul-smelling latrine pit in the darkness. No need for comment. I will hate the French for the rest of my days.

Alois Rosenwink

Declared Dead, or, a Telegram from Heaven!

Macedonia, called “the ass end of the world” by the soldiers. Lots of rocks and not enough bread. I'm lying with the 8th Reserve Jäger Battalion outside Monastir on Height 1050 in the Cerna arc. This major battle has been raging non-stop for days against the advancing French and Serbs of the Thessaloniki Army. The companies are torn apart and shot up except for a few men, and no prospect of relief. The mood is terrible!
During a lull in the action, a panting messenger arrives with orders for me to report to the battalion commander immediately. I sense disaster! But the dreaded commander receives me with a smile, hands me the Iron Cross First Class and the division order, which states that I have already been assigned to the weapons officer course in Spandau for two days. I see heaven full of bass violins and shoot downhill like an arrow.
In Kanartlarei I find a good-natured Etappenmajor, who transports me by means of car to the station, catching the Balkan train and arriving out of breath in Berlin. First stop: telegraph office. “Have E.K. I. Send wire lots of money. Hans,” was my message to my parents.
The next day, to my surprise, my old man is standing in front of me. I sense trouble. The old man is strangely moved. I sense even more trouble! Without saying a word, he rummages in his suitcase and

[102] “Kampf-Truppen-Kommandeur, responsible for troop movements.

hands me a field post package addressed to me that had been returned from Macedonia. Written on it in red ink was:

"Undeliverable. Recipient died a hero's death. Stamp. Res. Jäger Batl. 8."

This parcel had arrived at home a few hours before my telegram from Berlin, and had spread weeping and gnashing of teeth in my home. Mother and sisters are already sobbing with the seamstress, designing the mourning costumes, while the old gentleman is already brooding in dignified sorrow over the wording of the obituary. Into this mood, my telegram bursts. Everything is frozen and faces a mystery. Can't the telegram be a mistake or wrongly directed? How does their son come to Berlin? Doubts fill all hearts! Only the old man says confidently: "I recognize my son by the fact that he asked for so much money!" The subsequent stroll through Berlin that my old man's visit took in its wake was truly something to be proud of, and never again did a telegram for money have such resounding success.

I sometimes regretted later on that I was not pronounced dead more often!

H.K.

The Attack on the Regimental Band

As a pilot, I was stationed at Rorroy le Sec with the flight park to which I belonged. It was a bright sunny day, and I was off duty.
My brother-in-law, who has a considerable supply of wine and schnapps, was billeted in neighboring Spinkourt. How about I visit him and refresh the family ties! No sooner thought than done. Half an hour later, I was racing towards Spinkourt with my trusty NSU vehicle[103]. There, in the middle of the market square, the regimental band was playing, surrounded by a large crowd of male and female spectators. My heart leaped in my chest in anticipation of the pleasures to come. And lo and behold, over there stands my beloved brother-in-law. I wave to him with my hands. I squeal with delight. My NSU rattles merrily along.
Then, suddenly, there is shouting and screaming all around me, the band stops playing with an unmelodious flourish, and as I come to my senses, I find myself in the middle of a crowd of people running in all directions, swearing and cursing. In the joy of my heart, I had ridden into the middle of the regimental band, which, together with the audience, was scattered to the four winds under my impetuous attack. I was the sole ruler of the market square.
Then my brother-in-law approached me. He quickly jumped on the motorcycle behind me, and in a rapid drive we left the scene of my heroic deed, chased by the fear of an avenging Nemesis. It was only in my brother-in-law's hospitable halls that I recovered from the surprise after enjoying numerous cognacs.
On the return journey, I took a wide berth around the place and thanked the merciful fate that this, my only independent undertaking, remained without further consequences.

Berthold Fischer

[103] NSU was a vehicle manufacturer from 1873 to 1969, when it was acquired by Volkswagen AG and became a part of Audi AG.

A New Year's Eve Celebration, with Obstacles

Italy – the Piave Front! The offensive came to a standstill, and the 8th Reserve Jäger Battalion, of which I was adjutant at the time, was withdrawn from the front on New Year's Eve 1917 and billeted in a small Italian village.

In the evening, there is a big New Year's celebration in the provisionally furnished officers' mess. Unfortunately, the supplies captured during the offensive have already been used up, and in view of this circumstance, the supply officer asks his comrades to contribute from their own resources to increase the culinary delights. With a heavy heart, I too have to order my servant to contribute the carefully guarded box of chocolates, which is guarded with the eyes of Argus, for the greater good. From the deepest depths of the baggage van, he drags them out, the beautiful chocolates that were my only consolation, that I was attached to like my soul, and that I had always skillfully hidden from the sweet-toothed eyes of my comrades, and especially from the commander. I had found the beautiful box, weighing about 10 pounds, in a store (as the technical term went at the time) when I took Belluno, and hadn't even tried its contents myself, since I couldn't carry it into the mountains because of its weight.

There they were, gracing the table in their enticing brownness and forming the highlight of the whole evening. My beautiful hope of being able to secretly consume them alone was completely gone. My willingness to sacrifice was praised by all, and the whole company greedily set about it, for they were a pleasure we had long been without. And soon, except for a pitiful few, they had all disappeared into my comrades' stomachs, and I resigned myself to my fate with sadness.
Hours later – the mood had reached its peak after copious amounts of punch. One by one, my comrades disappeared, first to that little, familiar, quiet place, then, with unmistakable gestures, to their dark purpose. And none returned. Strange! The high commander also suddenly complains of abdominal pain, and my stomach also begins to rebel. In vain, I try to stop the dark urge by drinking cognac. The commander already expresses suspicion that the food might have contained something indigestible. His stern gaze seeks out the catering officer. But he too has already disappeared, and yawning gaps can be seen around the table. Gradually, the entire officer corps gathered outside in the fresh, open air. That certain quiet little place was no longer sufficient to contain the fabulous rush. And the laughing moon in the clear winter night sky illuminated a strange picture. A small hut and around it, in a squatting position with hanging trouser flaps, an entire officer corps, trying to free themselves from their dark urge with groaning, puffing and grumbling.

The supply officer is close to committing suicide and is desperately tearing at his sparse hair. Orderlies, cooks and assistant cooks are rushing around, already imagining themselves on the front lines. Then the field surgeon has the idea of subjecting the pitiful remains of the chocolates to a thorough examination. And behold, the mystery was solved: “The chocolates were laxative worm confectionery and came from an Italian drugstore.” I quickly disappeared into my quarters and could not be found by my vengeful comrades that night.

The New Year's Eve celebration in 1917 has remained in the memory of all participants, and especially in mine, for the rest of our lives.

H.K.

How I Celebrated the Emperor's Birthday for the Last Time

The Major strolled across the factory courtyard, where our artillery workshop had recently set up shop. I saw him and immediately started working on a gun that I had no business touching. It always makes a good impression to show a sense of duty, I thought to myself, even if it is only feigned.
“Reichart!” - ‘Sir?’ I stood there like an idiot, waiting for the kick-off that was to come, because the Major had a terrible temper and I always had a guilty conscience.
“There is a performance today in Valenciennes in honor of His Majesty's birthday; the formation received two tickets. First Lieutenant Peter and you are commanded to go.“ - ‘At your command, Major!”
If it had been a banquet, I would probably have said ’thank you very much,”[104] but in this case…

So I donned my best silk hat and we both set off, each of us feigning immense joy at the prospect of artistic enjoyment. The play was terrible nonsense, but it featured heroes, heroes who would have held the entire Western Front on their own.
At the end, we of course dutifully applauded and quickly disappeared to get to the officer’s mess as soon as possible, because there was also a celebration going on there, but in a way that suited us better. As we approached, we heard a huge commotion. “Aha,” I thought, “the official cheers must have already been given.” And so it was. When we entered, the Fidelitas[105] was already in full swing. My comrade Lohr approached me with a full bottle, embraced me, and put it to my mouth: “Hurrah for the Kaiser - may he who doesn’t empty a bottle in his name be called a "Hundsfott"[106].” Well, I swallowed until the bottle was empty. Since the right mood can't arise without music, the house band stepped up, so-called because when they played, a few houses were always on the verge of collapse. So we sang and drank until 4 o'clock in the morning.

Within a radius of a quarter of a mile, no one slept that night. And the Major slept only one floor above. If only it turns out well! In the morning, we all showed up for duty with very swollen eyes and excruciating headaches. Everyone avoided showing themselves where the strict commander might be under any circumstances, and wished that the impending storm may hit anyone, just not themselves. At around 10 o'clock, an orderly rushed around with the stereotypical message: “The gentlemen are ordered to see the Major.” Oh no! Pull yourself together. We gathered and went into the dreaded Major's antechamber; the oldest reported in, the Major appeared, and then came a thunderstorm the likes of which I have never heard in my entire life. It was a good thing that it did not come down on a single person, who would have inevitably reappeared at the opposite end of the globe. But as it was, everyone shook themselves free of this tantrum, and the kick-off left no particular impression on anyone.

That was our last Kaiser's birthday celebration in the field. But I would gladly endure a thunderstorm ten times stronger if we had a fresh and happy war that would bring freedom to our people and we could once again celebrate the birthday of a supreme leader.

O. Reichart

[104] The phrase used here is “danke gehorsamst”, which is a more polite way of saying thank you.
[105] A declaration of loyalty, or an event to celebrate loyalty.
[106] German word meaning essentially “scoundrel”, though can sometimes be more vulgar.

Before Verdun!

For months now,
The battle has raged in the semicircle around Verdun.
Along the entire front, a wild drumfire rages,
or rather,
it howls like an unearthly hurricane,
in which the single blow can hardly be heard.

East of Douaumont and north of Thiaumont,
the First Battalion of the First Regiment
is already being deployed for the second time
in this terrible struggle.

It's night as is black as pitch,
and cold rain pours down incessantly.
In their sunken, mud-filled trenches,
the hardened old fighters cower.
In between them, soft, milky-faced boys,
who just a few days before,
adorned with flowers and singing,
marched through the streets of their hometown.

In the bright light of the flares,
the boys stare
distractedly at their comrades,
who are lying so eerily and motionless in the trench
and on the berm,
so waxy and pale,
with traces of blood on their scuffed, clay-yellow jackets.
The stench of decomposition,
pungent swaths of gas and ecrasite[107] *shells,*
sting the shivering figures.
One or the other sinks,
leaning on his friend,
despite the crashing shells,
into a deathly heavy sleep.

Many a brain is shot through
by the wild succession of images
of the day before yesterday:
the twenty-eight-year-old in the middle of the marching column,
the man was blown to bits!
The piercing screams and the muffled groans
of this badly wounded comrade,
with whom one could not linger,
because duty called to move forward.

The Chauffour Gorge, the gorge of the dead

[107] An explosive material.

with its thousands of ghostly figures,
lying, sitting, kneeling,
leaning against trees,
waiting for the day when they
will find peace in the ground.
For no one dare
show them their last love,
without soon sharing their fate,
in the hellfire of these hellish canyons…

Now dawn is breaking.
The men stir
and stretch their weary bones.

The old keep a sharper watch.
In the first light of dawn, they recognize
the honeycomb trenches in front of them,
the target of the charge in just a few hours.
On the horizon,
the armored turrets of Fort Thiaumont rise up against the red sky.
Through all the whistling, booming, crashing
of the bombardment on both sides,
the very thickest, heaviest chunks howl into the fort –
thunderclaps –
the earth seems to heave,
and one black trail of smoke after another rises sky-high.

With shining eyes,
the men in the trench
see this spectacle,
and new strength flows into them.
"Hey, Frenchman, that's a nasty morning greeting!
You there must die so that we can live,
we and all our poor people."

Then there is a new creeping and groaning in the air,
and hair-raising over drawn-in heads,
one twenty-one year old snarls at the enemy trenches.
With a hellish crash, stones, beams
and human bodies whirl through the air.
It is the drumbeat of the assault that now begins.
The answer comes from the other side – not bad!

Dust, smoke and a single wall of fire
surrounds the gray figures, waiting.
Now there is a flash in the trench itself,
the German volleys hit the middle of it!
"Too short - too short!"
The bright green rounds fly high.
In vain!

More and more volleys follow,
and more and more bodies twitch, hit hard.
Death, the great unknown,
keeps stamping up and down the trench.
Even his old acquaintances
feel their nerves on edge,
and with every new blow, his body cramps.

"Oh, better to charge – to storm on the spot –
than to wait any longer in this place of horror!
Let us go, let us go!" –
Then the order comes from behind:
"In order that our own guns
can ruthlessly cover the nearby enemy trench
Our first line is to be cleared immediately.
Two hundred meters behind it,
the battalion digs itself free in the terrain.
But at the front, from each company,
until the charge in twenty-four hours,
one squad leader and six men will remain,
who have to identify the crew."
As short and clear as the order,
so difficult it is for everyone who leads here.
Because one thing is certain, come what may,
those at the front will stay there,
While those in the trench have seen their graves. –

Here the leader could show that he is a man,
he who leads by example could die here,
but he must not, he must not sacrifice himself now. –

"Volunteers forward!" –
And after a brief hesitation,
an old man here and a young lad there
volunteered, until the group was complete.
They all knew that they were volunteering
to certain death.
They stared into the distance, their features
stiff, their teeth gritting.
Perhaps one of them thought of home,
of his forests, his mountains.
Perhaps he sent a last greeting
to his sweetheart.
They step forward, not in the intoxication of yore –
the intoxication is long gone.
They sacrifice themselves – soldiers for their homeland. —

The next morning, the charge was a proud victory march.
The best were found dead at the front of the trench.
And now consider, just like these,
there were many, many thousands of others

in the German army
who, unknown and unnamed,
died as silent heroes.
Remember them today,
ten years since the mighty struggle
Of the best army in the world had begun.
Remember these heroes of our army,
who were greater heroes than many,
whose name, song and stone from ancient times have been told.
Shall their death be in vain?
"No!"
And act on the 'No', day in, and day out! -
So thank you them.

R.H.

A Few Days of Fighting by Parts of the Alpenkorps, the Royal Bavarian Life Guards and the 1st Jäger Battalion at the Somme, Southwest of Epehy - Fall 1918

On one of the first days of September – it was an afternoon – a sweltering heat prevailed over the entire torn terrain in front of our position. Nowhere a grove of trees or a picture of life on which the eye could rest, but only a single funneled field, churned up earth, remains of trenches, all together a grandiose, gruesome wasteland.

I was lying in an advanced position with my company. We were flanked by the 11th Company on the left and the Jägerns on the right. An eerie, ominous silence lay over us. Then came a flash. At 4 o'clock, the whole line suddenly came to life. Enemy planes circled above our position. Gradually, artillery fire began and quickly increased in intensity. It intensified from salvo to salvo, ultimately to a drumfire.

Mechanically, we jumped forward one by one, a little further each time, in order to get out of the barrage that the enemy had placed between us and the rear lines. The hail of iron that lasted perhaps half an hour – an eternity for us – was only slightly disturbed by our artillery.

Suddenly the enemy opened fire on the rear lines, the German front lines, probably because he thought they were finished. Several tanks advanced in dense columns, followed by masses of infantry, to our amazement. And now we received help.

An infantry support battery rattled towards us at a furious pace, set up, and after a short time two tanks were finished off with well-placed shots. Some of the monsters broke through our position, but were dealt with at the back.

Meanwhile, the enemy infantry had advanced to within 50 meters of us, suffering huge losses in individual groups. They were completely wiped out by our brave machine gunners. The pitiful remnants fled in haste. Some of the Tommy soldiers remained in our hands as prisoners and were tasked with bringing our wounded to safety. The attack was repulsed.

Wilhelm Briemann

A Serbian War Wedding

The Royal Bavarian Life Guards are marching along in pursuit of the routed Serbs of the Vardar. We take up quarters near Goerdelitza before the Branja pass. At daybreak, we are suddenly awakened by deafening music, and in response to our questions we learn that a Serbian peasant wedding is to be celebrated.

Soon part of the wedding procession arrived, namely the bride. She was driven to the church up on high on a tarpaulin-covered cart lined with carpet, accompanied by four young men in the picturesque traditional costumes of the Balkans on horseback. Strangely, the bride had to remain alone in the church while the cart and the entourage went to the groom's farm. There was a lot going on there in the meantime. With ear-splitting music, schnapps was eagerly consumed. The band consisted of two drummers and a flautist, and was tirelessly active from sunrise to sunset. However, the drummers always took turns with each other, while the flautist only played when he felt like it.
The bridegroom had to undergo a strange procedure. He sat on a stool in the middle of the courtyard, surrounded by a circle of women and girls who danced around him in time to the music. One after the other, they approached him and cut a tuft of his hair with scissors, which were then neatly packed in a handkerchief. Then it was the men's turn, who also formed a circle and shaved the poor devil piece by piece, one after the other, without using soap, which the delinquent acknowledged with a pitiful expression. During the whole ordeal, the schnapps bottle was diligently circulating. Only then was the groom allowed to take his bride out of the church, but he still had to resist his masterly desires for three more days.

A funeral I saw in Vole seemed similarly strange to me. The procession: in front a young fellow with a stick to which a rag of cloth was attached. Then came the dignified priest in a caftan glistening with sweat, followed by a boy with a metal container holding swollen rice. These were followed by the four pallbearers, who carried the open coffin with their hands. The laughing crowd of mourners followed. At the place designated for the burial, the priest performed a few ceremonies, then the whole company buried the body. After the work was done, the mourning relatives sat down on a carpet they had brought with them and enjoyed the rice dish in a cheerful gathering.

Emil Hamm

The Pilgrims of Vimy
by Franz Fröschl

One of my favorite memories of the campaign is when I was part of the pilgrims of the 1st Reserve Engineer Battalion, 3rd Field Company. Our equipment consisted of a tunic, field cap, haversack, and heavy knotted cane. That's how we took up our position.
We were quartered in a cellar in Vimy. Eight men occupied the beautiful salon seven meters below ground, which had three entrances, and our cover against artillery fire consisted of corrugated iron, covered with rubble with railroad tracks on top, straw, old rags, bricks and two millstones of three meters in diameter. On top of that, soil and bricks again.
We were only 13 meters away from the beautiful long-barrel battery “Sanfter Heinrich”, and were constantly subjected to a cannonade. The eight of us always took food in a raw state for nine portions and were greeted every morning by the English sugar loaves. But we were quite unconcerned, because our home was bombproof and protected from harm at its entrance by a schnapps balloon[108], lit at night with a

[108] A “schnapps balloon” is just a container.

candle and marked “Vorsicht zerbrechlich!” (Caution, fragile!). The English probably found out about this and just gently knocked on our door, but never visited.

After drinking coffee, we had to push ourselves out of the building one by one in sections to avoid being stung by the English beetles. We were called pilgrims because we had a real station for the banished and scattered, who sought refuge with us. One man always stayed at home for the day and had to do the cooking. Since no one wanted to volunteer, we always drew lots, because it was not pleasant to have to leave the hole four or six times a day and grab food, because our friends from “Sanften Heinrich” always called the English gently, asking whether they were still there, and there was always a prompt reply!

When we left our hut, we marched to our position, equipped with a haversack and cudgel, so that we could beat the English with them if necessary. We were known as the 'pilgrims' along the entire line. Then we went to work building the tunnel. Our foreman, a farmer's son from Ruhpolding, recited the well-known Upper Bavarian prayer: “Eichel Sechser, nichts für uns” (Six acorns, not for us), etc., and then we went to work in the tunnel. Due to my knack for twisting my leg like a Turk, I was always lucky enough to go to the front to clear out the hole there. Our first question was always, “How far along are the English?” Our listening post had to observe what they were doing so that one day, when the tunnel inevitably crashed, the bread bag with the knot stick would not have to go home alone. After five hours, our work was done and we left with music. A “Fotzhobel”[109] in front and me at the end, rattling all the positions from the battery to the pioneer depot, as we threw our grenade rings onto the market. When we arrived home, there was a general clean-up and a meal. Then we went hunting for duds. From the proceeds, a man was always sent to Trocour to buy wine. In the evening we gathered in our home. Some other pilgrims from the village were visiting us because the English were on their heels, “Marmeladekübeln”[110] in tow.

One familiar face and popular beer sponsor was the Prussian first lieutenant of the “Sanfter Heinrich” battery. He was always with us because our dinner often consisted of roast hare and they tasted very good. But once he was annoyed because he had been clawed by one of them; we reconciled him with “Hausenrücken”[111] in milk and cream sauce. As a peace prize, he gave me 15 liters of beer because I was the game warden. I can only say that it couldn't have been any better for the monks in Altötting than it was for us.

Unfortunately, the good times lasted only three months. Then we were all replaced due to overexertion and the poor air in the tunnel, or perhaps because I had made too much use of the local area with regard to the hares. We didn't really know why. Perhaps you get a pale appearance from eating too much cat stew. The farewell from Vimy was magnificent. With musical accompaniment, we had to leave the position with two dead and three wounded due to bad weather.
The few pilgrims who had escaped unscathed stayed together as far as Verdun, where I was the last to leave the place, forced to do so by my beautiful medal. Hopefully my brothers will not have forgotten me in the hereafter, and I will be able to resume my work as a game warden if the opportunity arises.

[109] A Bavarian and Austrian colloquialism meaning “mouth organ”, or singer.
[110] A jam bucket.
[111] Hare’s back, a German meal.

Retrospective

Do you remember, comrade?
A long box,
drab, with two flagpoles on it,
a heavy, iron-clad gate,
a German soldier in front of it in a helmet,
sharp commands in the distance,
the complete picture: our barracks!

Inside, in those bare rooms,
tough men, young virgins,
quiet submission, dull rumbling,
flaming ambition, stormy will,
whether Bavarian or Prussian, whether rich or poor,
the Kaiser's coat makes them all equal!

And we, comrade, were there too!
Do you remember? Slow step - one - two -
grinding and flogging and re-exercising,
shifting posts, greasing trouser boots.
But it was still beautiful, soldiering!

Of course, there were also many hard things,
when the helmet and the rifle and the gun weighed heavily,
when your knees buckled at every step,
your tongue stuck to the roof of your mouth,
when every thought was of home.
And later in the field, in the dirt and in need,
so far from life, so close to death…

But when on the march it sounded out of the ranks
and leaped jubilantly into minds and hearts,
a song of home, of love, of pain,
then we were glad to be there.

Now the great experience is over...
Only sometimes, when the hands rest idle,
the soul still marches in step, in step,
and a soldier's song sounds softly along...
But one thing, comrade, time has given us,
the one lesson for life:
Just as we, as men in gray field dress,
were willing to sacrifice the last,
when we were always at the front line,
so be it in the days to come:
Where we stand, there we stand,
in the fight of life, a German soldier!

H.F.

The Bowling Club: “Gut Holz"[112]

Not all of the men in the Stoßtrupp were tried for abetting treason, although they were just as actively deployed and had done their duty, just as we convicts had. Thanks to our clever tactics, the true strength of our formation remained hidden from the otherwise resourceful system police until the very end. It was speculated that the number of men who had carried out the main operations on November 8th and 9th, 1923 must have been greater than the small group of the accused. But with regard to the individual Stoßtruppen not registered in the search file of the then Department 1 of the Munich Police Headquarters, they were completely in the dark. Thus some of our ranks were spared from being imprisoned in the fortress. And that was a good thing. The non-imprisoned comrades carried the will to resist further into the people. They did everything to preserve Adolf Hitler's work.

Under the leadership of the present SA Brigadeführer Hanns Bunge, they joined the German-ethnic association “Thule Society” in Munich, which had not yet been included in the general ban on parties. In addition, they came together under the mask of an outwardly quite harmless bowling club called “Gut Holz”, probably in memory of our former meeting place, the bowling alley in the Torbräu. The following comrades belonged to the bowling club:
Walter Baldenius, Hans Bunge, Emil Dietl, Wilhelm Dirr, Herbert v. Engelbrechten, Fritz Fischer, Josef Fleischmann, Ludwig Fuchs, Johann Frosch, Wilhelm Kaiser, (killed on November 8th, 1939 in the assassination attempt in the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich), Florian Kastner, Albert Lindner, Franz Lutz, (killed on November 8th, 1939 in the assassination attempt in the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich), Hans Schultes and Dr. (Engineer) Fritz Schwerdtel.

Despite this camouflage, the activities of this strange bowling club, which seemed to be more about political subversion than about the motto “Gut Holz!”, aroused the suspicions of certain political detectives. These suspicions increased over time to such an extent that the bowlers often had to change their bowling alley during the week, sometimes once, sometimes twice, and finally several times.
As political couriers, as the backbone of the banned party and the SA, the men did their duty unwaveringly and unflinchingly, thus fulfilling their duty to us first. They too acted according to the Führer's guiding principle:

“Nothing for ourselves, but everything for Germany!”

[112] “Gut Holz” is a German greeting, literally meaning “Good wood”, but in the context of bowlers, “Holz” refers to a bowling ball.

End!

Some 15 years have passed since then. All that we strove for with passionate hearts, all that we suffered for and fought for, has become reality today.

Our comrades of 1923/24 have been scattered all over the German-speaking world.
When the fight began again in 1925, we were there, too, no longer as a closed formation as in the past, but one in this place and the other in that place in the movement, wherever the Führer called him. Many times fate seized us with a hard hand and jumbled us up, and the storms of life blew fiercely around us. Following the example of Adolf Hitler and our inner calling to him, we did our duty. Even if he could not see our work, we always tried to stand up with him. We were spared nothing. We were once born fighters for Germany, we have been fighters for Germany, we will remain fighters for Germany throughout our lives, and as fighters for Germany, the Almighty shall also find us when we stand before his judgment seat one day.

Certainly many a good comrade who marched with Adolf Hitler and with us in rank and file on the lonely road has fallen by the wayside. Some were overtaken by relentless death; others, for whom the march became too arduous, for whom it took too long to reach our goal, lost, worn down and exhausted by the constant hardship and unspeakable misery of the years of the system, lost the strength of faith in the final victory and dropped out of line before time. But these were isolated cases, hardly a third dozen in number. We men of the Stoßtrupp rarely see each other. We wear a narrow silver stripe on the left sleeve of our simple brown shirts or service tunics, which we received from the Führer on the tenth anniversary of November 9th, 1923. The inscription on the sleeve, "Adolf Hitler Stoßtrupp 1923," reminds us again and again of that hard, great, and yet so beautiful time in which we were helping to lay the foundation of Greater Germany.

We, who came out of the trenches of the Great War and in the very earliest days marched along the hard and difficult path of the Führer and his movement over all the heights and through all the depths of the political past of the last one and a half decades, stand shaken to our innermost soul before the wonderful workings of a kind providence, which allowed us to experience this mighty time in hope and action, which has brought us together so early with the man who created the miracle of the German resurrection. But I would like to conclude my memories of the time I spent with Adolf Hitler in Landsberg Fortress with the words he said to us, his old fighters, on November 8th, 1935:

"A nation breaks up, and then a small group of unknown people rises to begin a journey that begins fanatically and continues fanatically. Just a few years later, these few and unknown, nameless people have already given rise to numerous battalions, and again, years later, these battalions have already become regiments and divisions, with local groups having become districts and regions. And a few years later, the movement sent numerous deputies to those representative bodies, while it fights relentlessly on the streets. Again and again, new ones fall from the ranks, thousands are injured – but the stream nevertheless grows larger and fights its way to power. And then it sets its standard over an entire state.

A wonderful movement! History will record it as one of the most wonderful and remarkable times in world history."

- The Führer, November 8th, 1935

Heil Hitler!

Hans Kallenbach